

INDIA AND BRITAIN

INDIA AND BRITAIN

A MORAL CHALLENGE

BY

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What I Owe to Christ, Sadhu Sundar Singh
etc.

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS
58 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

First Published October 1935

10-11-48
9637

Printed in Great Britain

TO
THE NEW GENERATION OF
MEN AND WOMEN IN
INDIA AND BRITAIN

"To govern a country under responsibility to the people of that country, and to govern one country under responsibility to the people of another, are two very different things. What makes the excellence of the first, is that freedom is preferable to despotism."

JOHN STUART MILL
Representative Government
chap. xviii

PREFACE

At last, after many wanderings by sea and land, I have reached an Indian home where I can finish this book in peace, amidst the beauty of the Simla Hills. It is ideal for such a purpose, because my host and hostess are Indian Christians, who love their own country and love England also, where they spent their early days. They have thus been able to criticise and appreciate what I have written, not only from the Indian standpoint, but also from that of Great Britain. Other friends in Simla have done me a similar service.

We have failed—we of the older generation, who led Europe into the abyss in 1914, and have been laboriously building a house on the sands of suspicion ever since. Though we have not yet realised the fact, our greatest failure since the War has been in India. For in spite of long continued effort, worthy of sincere regard, we have neither given nor found peace. Our minds have remained nerve-racked by what has been happening in Europe, and we have not been able to give our undivided attention to Asia.

Let no one, therefore, carry away the thought that the Constitution now offered to India will

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suffice, and that our debts are paid. The cyclic struggle is not yet over: it has only just begun. A deadlock has been reached, and we have to seek its moral causes together with the will-power needed to remove it.

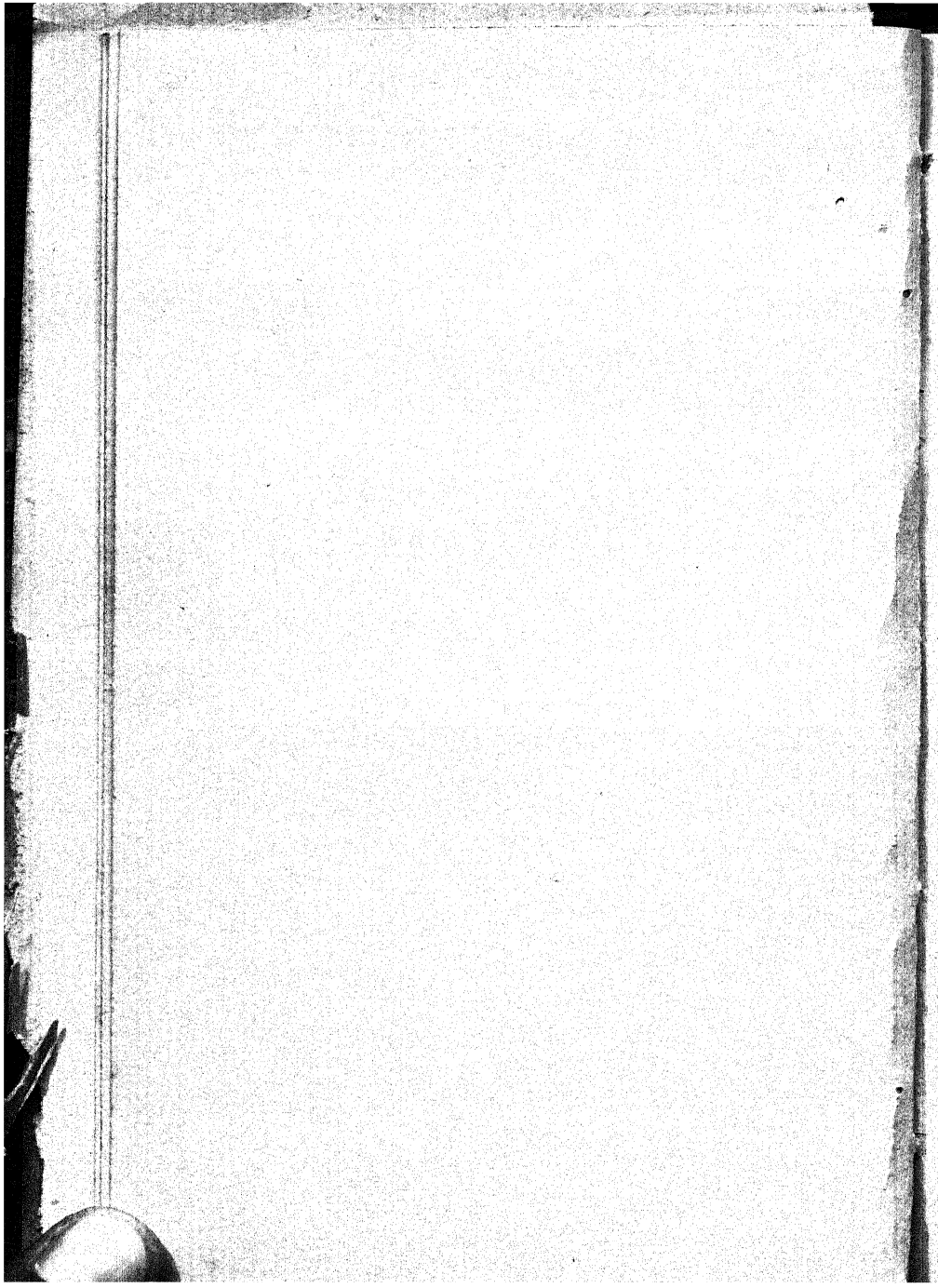
In crucial times like these the appeal must be made to a new generation—to those men and women who have witnessed the effects of the world-cataclysm of 1914-18, but have not been shell-shocked by it. For this reason I have dedicated my book to them.

C. F. ANDREWS

MANORVILLE,
SIMLA, W.

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CHAPTER I

THE ARGUMENT OF FORCE

I

I HAD gone up to Oxford in order to speak on India at the Union Club in some College rooms at Balliol. The Society had been formed by undergraduates with the object of uniting East and West in friendship by frank mutual intercourse. Generous freedom of speech had been the keynote of the whole evening's discussion. My host took me back to his own rooms, and after a further talk round the fireside, I went to rest.

But not to sleep. The evening had been far too exciting for me to forget it easily, and the discussion went on repeating itself in my brain during the long hours of the night. In the end, it suggested to me the form which this book might take, and I determined to pursue it. We should all talk freely, in its pages, and put our own case forward in the way that appealed to us most. None should be offended, even if bitter words were uttered. For we should honestly set out to face the truth, wherever it might lead us. Only in such an atmosphere could anything

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worth saying be uttered with good humour, where the subject was so controversial.¹

II

Anil Bose had recently been "listening in" to Mr Winston Churchill's broadcast from the B.B.C. He had heard the speaker referring to India as Great Britain's chief "possession," which had been won by the sword and must be kept by the sword.

When we met together some days later Anil brought with him the full report of this broadcast from the *Listener*. There were only a few of us present at the outset and it formed the basis of our conversation. We named our discussion on it "The Argument of Force." Neil Munro, a Highlander from Inverness, was with us.

Anil, who was a history student, could hardly restrain his impatience, as he tried to show us how outrageously Mr Churchill had misinterpreted Indian history.

"Listen to this," he said to Neil, with excitement, and he began to read the opening passage thus :

"If our forbears had been cowed by heavy odds, the British Empire would have stopped at Brighton Beach. It would never have

¹ Of course, the students into whose mouths the arguments have been put are fictitious personalities, and no reference to any real individual is intended.

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existed if Clive had not won the Battle of Plassey—not at the odds of five to one, nor at ten to one, but at more than twenty to one. This Indian Home Rule plan strikes at the destiny of the British Empire, and the destiny of the British Empire will not be settled by mere numbers. . . . It will be settled by the march of world events and by the faithful discharge of their duty by men and women spread throughout the land, whose constant thought is for the future of our country and whose will-power is unconquerable.”

I had heard this speech, over the wireless, late one evening at Malvern, where I had been speaking at an Oxford Group gathering. We had “listened in” after the meeting was over, and had felt a burning shame that such a public utterance could be made by a responsible statesman more than twenty years after the tragedy of August 1914. It seemed impossible to hold such a theory of brute force, and at the same time be true to the teaching of Christ. This was what we had all felt on that evening at Malvern.

Anil listened with deep interest as I told him all about this. It softened him for the moment, and he recovered his good humour.

“Do look,” he said with a laugh, “what an absurd picture he draws of Clive and the Battle of Plassey! Has he never studied Indian history at all? Only the other day I was reading an

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account of the whole scene described by your two latest historians."

"What history do you mean?" I asked.

"It's called *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, by Thompson and Garratt. Let me read their account, and then compare it with Winston Churchill's picture. Here is the passage:

"A plot was formed to make Mir Jafar the Nawab. When the plot was nearly ripe Aminchand threatened to divulge it unless he were promised 5 per cent of the Nawab's treasure. Clive drew up double agreements: one on white paper, genuine; one on red paper, fictitious. Both were to be signed by Clive, Watson, and the Select Committee; the sham paper was shown to Aminchand. Watson's signature to this, however, had been forged by Clive. . . . The battle next day consisted of two parts: a morning cannonade, followed by a drenching monsoon downpour, which damaged the Nawab's ammunition: then an attack, precipitated by Major Kirkpatrick's keenness, and ending in a complete victory at a cost of 65 casualties. Even the defeated lost only about 500 men. *As a battle Plassey was ridiculous*. Mir Jafar, who vacillated during the engagement, came timidly round with congratulations and was told he was now the Nawab."¹

¹ *Op. cit.*, by Thompson and Garratt (Macmillan).

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Anil emphasised the sentence which I have italicised and repeated it: "As a battle, Plassey was ridiculous." Neil was about to say something in reply, but Anil continued with emphasis, as if he were giving a lecture:

"Every Indian schoolboy knows how Clive cheated Aminchand and left him an imbecile—a doddering imbecile! Clive took £230,000's worth of loot and was astonished at his own moderation. We have learnt that story by heart in India: and yet here is an English statesman holding up Clive and the Battle of Plassey as the foundation pillars of the British Empire! And you, in London, have put Clive's statue outside the India Office as your model! If you had put Edmund Burke in that place there would have been some decency in it."

Anil threw out this challenge but no one took it up. He was the most brilliant scholar in his year, and this British period in Indian History was his special subject; so he spoke with authority.

"How would *you* like a Clive," he asked, "let loose in *your* country with all his gang of freebooters? Thank God! we have got an honest history of British India at last, which tells the truth. It calls these marauders by their proper name, 'Conquistadores,' and compares them with Cortes and Pizarro. Here is the sentence: 'A gold lust, unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizarro's age, filled the English mind. Bengal,

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in particular, was not to know peace again until it had been bled white.'"¹

III

Anil's excitement had died down when John Murray and Alan Menzies entered the room. I explained the point we had reached. John said, "Oh, we all know Winston. Don't take him too seriously."

"But I do take him very seriously indeed," I answered with emphasis, "for he is that strange mixture of the aristocrat turned demagogue, who can do such infinite mischief. Look what he says here :

"My friends, to whom I now speak—the working men—let me tell you that India has quite a lot to do with the wage-earners of Great Britain. If we lost India it would not be a hundred thousand unemployed ; it would be more like two million bread-winners, who would be tramping the streets. We have, in this island, forty-five millions living at a higher level than the people of any other European country. One-third of these would have to go down, out, or under, if we ceased to be a great Empire with world-wide connections and trade. That would be the fate of the larger population of Little England."

¹ See Note B.

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IV

"Don't you see," I added, "how mischievous all that is; how there is not a single word up to this point concerning the wishes and interests of the people of India? Nor is there anything about their national hopes and aims, which a century of British rule and the study of British history have raised. It is all purely selfish. There is no hint given that it might be better for the Indian villagers to grow their own cotton, and spin and weave their own cloth during the 'idle' months of the year, rather than spend their hard-earned pice in buying Lancashire cotton goods. The one thought is, that British goods must continue to be supplied—by force if necessary—to these poverty-stricken villagers, so that the number of the unemployed in Great Britain may not increase, and our own extravagant standard of living may be kept up. The vast unemployment in India, where it is chronic among millions of people, never comes into his picture."

Anil by this time had got hold of the *Listener* again, and read to us, in a Churchillian voice, the following passage:

"You will say that we must not exploit India. We must not suck the life out of these poor Indians for our benefit. We would scorn to do that: we would rather starve (or 'clem,' as they say in Lancashire) than have them oppressed for our advantage.

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"But, my friends, the benefits that Britain derives from India are only a fraction of the benefits we have given to India in return: I do not speak only of the fruitful exchanges of trade. If a visitor came from another planet and looked over this worried, perplexed and tumultuous human scene, he would say, 'Why is this continent of India so different from Europe; so different from the rest of Asia, indeed from the rest of the world? Why is it that one law and one allegiance laps them in a common tranquillity? Whence comes this strange immunity from the perils and disasters which have darkened the life of every other continent? How is it that India has not fallen into the anarchy which has engulfed China, or under the tyranny by which Russia is frozen and enslaved?'

"The answer would be that far away is a small island, shrouded by the mists of the Atlantic Ocean, which by its sea-power, by its heart's blood and its civic virtues, has created and organised in two hundred years a serene and splendid harmony of peace and order, of tolerance, of justice and of law; that a few thousand officials and barely fifty thousand soldiers, renewed from generation to generation, controlled by the Mother of Parliaments, and inspired by the venerable symbols of the British Monarchy, have been able to confer these inestimable blessings and privileges upon India with its three hundred and fifty million

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people, constituting one-sixth of the human race. The answer would be that Britain has done for India, quite surely and firmly, what we all hope the League of Nations will be able some day to do for Europe. . . . That is a proud answer."

"What utter tosh!" said Anil with disgust. "Why, every word is exaggerated. Look at this phrase, 'lapped in a common tranquillity.' Doesn't he realise that India is seething with discontent? We are sick and tired of these 'inestimable blessings' of the patronising type we know so well. Haven't the hundreds and thousands of young men and women offering passive resistance taught him anything? Oh, do look at this gem, 'a serene and splendid harmony of peace and order, of tolerance, of justice and of law.' Why, in India there have always been two standards: one treatment for the European and another for the Indian, one treatment for the white and another for the coloured. And has he never realised that thousands have been kept in prison, and hundreds are still there, without an open trial? Is that a 'splendid harmony of peace and order'?"

"Oh, just look here again!" he cried, turning over the page. "Ah! the cat's out of the bag at last!" He read as follows:

"The other day I urged the Conservative Party to ask themselves one or two blunt questions. Would any other country in the

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modern world behave as we are doing about our great possessions and markets overseas? Would France? Would Holland? Would Italy? Those friendly countries stand amazed at British folly! Would Germany? Why, she is preparing to reclaim by force of arms those colonies and possessions of which she had been deprived. Then there is Japan, which is building up an empire while we seem ready to let ours drift away at the ebb of the tide.

“There is one more question we must ask ourselves. The storm-clouds are gathering over the European scene. Our defences have been neglected. Danger is in the air—yes, I say, in the air! The mighty, discontented nations are reaching out with strong hands to regain what they have lost, nay, to gain a predominance which they never had. Is this, then, the time to plunge our vast Dependency of India into the melting-pot? Is this the time fatally to dishearten, by such a policy, all those strong, clean forces at home upon which the strength and future of Britain depends?

“There, you see,” Anil exclaimed, “we are back at the old level of conquest and possession and empire. These ‘strong, clean forces’ he tells about are the bayonet, the rifle and the bomb, to strike down the ‘mighty, discontented nations’ who are all round like a pack of wolves eager to tear India out of Britain’s clutches. The

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argument amounts to this, that Great Britain must arm herself up to the teeth, because otherwise Japan, or somebody else, is bound to seize India and snatch her away from Britain's grasp."

At this point I broke in with a recollection of my own: "When I heard Mr Churchill repeat these words, he almost hissed them. 'Danger is in the *air*!' he cried, 'Yes, I say, in the *air*!' It was just as if he was on the stage acting in the play of *Macbeth*, in the 'dagger' scene. It gave one the creepy feeling of aeroplanes just over one's head."

V

John had been silent all this while. My earlier interruption had been too emphatic, and I had regretted it afterwards, for I had noticed, at the Union Club, how very fair-minded he had been during the discussion, and how he had always taken the side that others had dropped in order to give it a fair hearing. He now came into the discussion.

"I must confess," he said, "I was impressed by the argument of Churchill's conclusion, when I heard him on the wireless." John asked for the copy of the *Listener* and read it over:

"I do not take so poor a view of our moral rights in India as is fashionable nowadays. We are no alien power in India. We are the latest of many conquerors and we are the only conquerors who have ever made the well-

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being of the Indian masses their supreme satisfaction. What is the chief shame of this Home Rule Bill? It is that we finally withdraw our guardianship from this teeming myriad population of Indian toilers. We withdraw our protection from their daily lives. We withdraw it, not merely as an experiment which can be brought to an end at any moment but as a solemn abdication and repudiation of duty. We are henceforth to shrug our shoulders about their education and their hospitals, the canals which water their fields, the courts of justice on which they rely; and we cut them from the House of Commons which has so long been their shield."

"Of course," said John, "a lot of that is rubbish." He looked down the page. "Take this, for instance: 'We are no alien power'—that's humbug. And then he brings in the boast about our being 'conquerors.'"

"That's absolutely untrue," Anil said, with vehemence. "Your own historians, like Seeley and others, have proved again and again that India was never conquered by British troops. I remember a phrase of Seeley in his *Expansion of England* where he says, 'We are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule India as conquerors.' Every intelligent historian has recognised that fact."

"Yes," said John with a laugh, "and I was going to acknowledge it also, Anil, when you

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butted in. But all the same this latter part hits me, where he says, 'We finally withdraw our guardianship from this teeming myriad population of Indian toilers.' Just there is my great anxiety. Ought we to make that 'solemn abdication'?

"Sometimes I feel like Sinbad the Sailor with the burden of those three hundred and fifty million people on my back. There's *my* Old Man of the Sea, which I can't get rid of! As Churchill says, we've built canals, and hospitals, and God knows what! to help these poor people. Can we really tell them now to go and fend for themselves? What will happen when we go away? That is a question which I find very difficult to answer. Ought we to transfer the whole burden at once to you and lay it on your shoulders? I wish we could!"

VI

It was decided between us that we should continue the discussion which we had thus started. Others might enter in and help us where expert knowledge would be needed; for we should have to consider carefully the economic effect of British rule on the common people. Furthermore, we should have to find out what was the Christian view of "Empire." From time to time it might be necessary for me to deal separately with some branch of the whole subject of which I had made a special study, such

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as the "race" question and the treatment of Indians abroad. At these points the form of discussion and dialogue might be dropped.

We all felt certain that we had done the right thing in taking first Mr Churchill's "Argument of Force." For although it had been discredited in Great Britain since the World War, there had been a strong wave of reaction passing over Europe bringing back among the multitudes the old fatal appeal to violence in new forms.

CHAPTER II

TAGORE'S APPEAL

I

WHEN we met again other students had joined us. One of these was Safdar Ali from St Jude's, a Muhammadan, who was loud in his indignant protest against Mr Churchill's broadcast. He, like Anil, was a brilliant student, who was likely to be a leader in India in the near future. Mulchand, a Hindu from the Punjab, and Abdul Majid, another Moslem, were also present, and their eyes flashed with fire as they declared to me how keenly they had felt the insult and how deeply it had pained them to go on listening to Mr Churchill. His constant use of the word "Empire" and his mention of India—their own Motherland—as Britain's "possession," had made them furious. His speech had the underlying assumption running through it that their own country belonged to people like him, and they could not bear the thought. His very tone was insulting, as he threw out his racial challenge on the air, little caring that Indians themselves were listening to every word he said.

Abdul Majid told us how, on that night, he had been the guest of an English friend, who

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had specially invited him to hear this broadcast on India.

"When it was all over," he said, "my friend apologised to me; for he saw what pain I had suffered. But all that night I couldn't get a wink of sleep for thinking about it. It made me wonder if Mr Churchill realised what Young India is thinking to-day. How would *he* like it if we talked about *his* country in the same manner? When we hear him, we are inclined to give up all that Mahatma Gandhi has taught us about non-violence and civil resistance. We say to one another, 'Brute force is the only thing that an Englishman like him can understand.'"

II

My own sympathies were naturally with these students, apart from any plea for violence. It had seemed to me incredible that Mr Churchill, who had passed through the agony of the World War, and as a Cabinet Minister had given solemn pledges to India at its close, could now put forward again the exploded theory of ruling India by force as a conquered country.

For the mischief of such an utterance would not stop with the small number of Indians resident in Great Britain. The occasion was one of critical importance, and the full report of his speech would be circulated through the Indian press in all the great cities.

The British students who were present at our

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discussion thoroughly disliked Churchill's Indian policy and were inclined to discount it. This seemed to me to be shortsighted, and I tried to explain that his attitude, however much we might deplore it and protest against it, could not be dismissed with impatience, because we were living in one of the most difficult periods of modern history and were still suffering from the after-effects of the World War. Ever since the economic collapse of recent years a much more selfish view of world politics had spread from one country to another.

"Churchill," I suggested, "claims to be able to interpret this new expression of public feeling in England. His mind's quite saturated with the idea of power. This gives him his strength of conviction. For he means exactly what he says and he believes the country is with him. All this is quite different from the England I can remember when I was a boy. For though my father was an ardent Conservative in politics, he brought me up as a lover of English freedom. Since then I've learnt to distrust profoundly any such words as 'conquest' and 'possession' applied to India. Yet to-day we all find ourselves confronted by these strangely disturbing forces. We seem to have gone back, not forward."

John Murray had been silently listening. "Most of us," he said, "have been astounded at the swing over on the Continent. Even here, in England, when we speak of giving a free

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Constitution to India we don't get the same response as before."

Safdar Ali raised an objection. "Aren't those all mere excuses?" he asked.

"No," I answered, "I am afraid not. We can't count upon Great Britain remaining uninfluenced by this reactionary spirit. For, with Europe in such an unsettled state, we are within the danger zone. The ultimate resort to violence may at any time be made once more. Then impatience may gain the upper hand, and make any reasoned consideration of the Indian question impossible."

III

Alan Menzies now took up the subject. He had many close Indian friends and stood on their side in most discussions. After taking his degree he intended to go out to the Far East. In all probability he would finally settle down in China as a medical missionary. But he had not yet made up his mind.

"Isn't there," he asked me, "a violent spirit rising in the East, just as destructive as this 'clean, strong force' to which Churchill appeals in the West? Aren't we playing with fire, while the whole world has become like a powder magazine?"

Anil, who was Alan's closest friend, answered for me. He assured us all that nothing could keep violence in check in India if the present repressive policy continued much longer. Revolt

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was certain to spread far and wide. He then went on to tell us his own story.

His father was a Government servant, and therefore he had been brought up in an atmosphere where everything English was praised. He had intended to follow in his father's steps, and had received the highest education possible at the Presidency College, Calcutta. But many times over his heart misgave him; and more than once he had almost determined to give up everything for the sake of his country, as his sister Asha had done; but he had not the strength of will to do so, for it would have been contrary to all that his father had planned out for him. He had won a Government scholarship, which had enabled him to get to Oxford, and he had finished his first year at College. His sister, after suffering imprisonment as a passive resister, had already passed three years at Oxford. They were devoted to one another.

"Frankly," said he, "I often feel that I have been a coward for not joining in the National Movement. While young men and women also, like my sister, have gone to jail without any resistance, I've felt thoroughly ashamed of myself for making no sacrifice at all."

"I remember someone telling me," said John, "how those who stayed at home, at the beginning of the War, felt desperately ashamed of themselves. It must have been something like that with you."

"Yes," said Anil eagerly, "that was just what

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happened; and again and again the thought came back to me that I had failed to help my country in her hour of need. This made that broadcast all the more galling. I've seen Mahatma Gandhi and asked him about my future, and also Rabindranath Tagore: for they are the two greatest and noblest men in India to-day."

"What did they tell you?" asked Neil Munro.

"They both told me," said Anil, "to go on with my studies; and whenever the despondency comes over me their advice gives me courage and I don't feel such a moral coward as before."

Tagore's name carried me forward to the point I had intended to reach if possible. For I had brought down with me some passages from his writings. They seemed to me to offer, better than anything else, the answer to the broadcast, which had given such great offence to the Indian students. For Tagore could take the moral issue for us into a far higher region of thought, above the murky atmosphere in which politicians usually dwell.

The poet is now approaching his fourscore years, which is a great age in a climate such as India. He spends most of his time in retirement at Santiniketan, watching the course of human events without taking active part in them. His mind is as detached and free from bitterness as it is possible to keep it in an age of violence and strife.

For three generations past the Tagore family—

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the most famous in all India for artistic and literary achievement—has followed closely in the steps of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. It has attempted to build up a true moral harmony between East and West on honourable terms. All through the nineteenth century this larger hope of a union of hearts and minds had been retained, and further steps have been taken by the poet himself towards its accomplishment. For he has founded an institution called *Visvabharati* (World Culture), where East and West meet together for the common pursuit of art and learning.

In the moral debacle which followed the World War Tagore, in despair, surrendered his title. He could not bear to be silent after the humiliation of Amritsar. Yet even this shock has not altered his belief in the true meeting of East and West. His whole heart is still bent upon its fulfilment.

I asked Anil to read the passages I had chosen from Tagore. He did so with such feeling that it seemed almost as if Tagore himself was entering into our discussion.

IV

“When I was very young,” the poet writes, “we were all full of admiration for Europe, with its high civilisation and its vast scientific progress, and especially for England, through her glorious literature, which had brought a new inspiration into our young lives. The English authors whose

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books and poems we studied were full of love for humanity, freedom and justice.

"This great literary tradition had come down to us from the Revolution period. We felt its power in Wordsworth's sonnets about human liberty. We gloried in it, even in the immature productions of Shelley, written in the enthusiasm of his own youth, when he declared against the tyranny of priestcrafts and preached the overthrow of all despotisms through the power of suffering bravely endured."

V

At that point I broke in for a moment, saying, "It was just the same with the poet's elder brother, whom we used to call 'Borodada.' He was an aged recluse, but none the less an ardent lover of India. When his country's wrongs in any part of the world came up before his notice his eyes would kindle with indignation. But whenever he spoke of Shakespeare, or Dickens, or Sir Walter Scott, who were his three favourite British authors, his whole countenance would soften with deep affection, and his patriotism would take a different tone. For these British authors were kindred spirits. They were his very own. They stood out clearly on his side in all his highest ideals. He could appeal to them direct against the acts of repression which were being committed in Bengal."

"We can sympathise with Tagore there,"

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said Alan Menzies. "We British can never lose our own love of freedom as long as we have Shakespeare and Milton, and the poets of the Revolution period. Scott, again, was an ardent Tory, but he loved liberty—and what a gentleman he was!"

"Listen to this," said Anil, reading from his manuscript of Tagore as follows:

"We believed with all our simple faith that, even if we rebelled against foreign rule, we should have the sympathy of the West. We felt that England was on our side in wishing us to gain our freedom. But there came a rude awakening as to our actual relations. We found them at last to be those of force rather than freedom.

"This not only disturbed in a great measure our youthful dream: it also began to shatter our high ideas concerning our English rulers themselves. We came to know at close quarters the Western mentality in its unscrupulous aspect of exploitation, and it revolted us more and more. During the twentieth century, and especially since the European War, this evil seems to have grown still worse and our bitterness of heart has increased.

"*Those who live in England, away from the East, have now got to recognise that Europe has completely lost her former moral prestige in Asia. She is no longer regarded as the champion, throughout the world, of fair dealing, and the exponent of high principle, but rather as the upholder of Western*

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race supremacy and the exploiter of those outside her own borders.

“For Europe this is, in actual fact, a great moral defeat that has happened. Even though Asia is still physically weak, she can now afford to look down on Europe where before she looked up. This carries with it tragic possibilities of long-continued conflict.

“I cannot truly point to any short-cut to win relief. What is most needed is a radical change of mind and will and heart. What I really believe in is a meeting between the best minds of the East and the West in order to come to a frank and honourable understanding.

“Meanwhile, let it be clearly understood in the West that we, who are born in the East, still acknowledge in our heart of hearts the greatness of European civilisation. For we acknowledge, in the very act of striving for liberty, the noble character of the Western education which has roused us from our slumber.’”

VI

Neil Munro had become impatient as Anil read on. “Surely,” he cried out, “Tagore contradicts himself. He says in one place that Europe has completely lost her moral prestige in Asia; and then he goes on to say that those who are born in the East still acknowledge, in their heart of hearts, Europe’s greatness.”

“Don’t you see,” I explained, “how desper-

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ately he tries to win back our affection? In spite of heart-breaking disappointments in recent years, he still goes on hoping against hope. There he is truly noble."

"Just look," said Anil, "how he continues, 'I myself,' he writes, 'have a firm faith in what is human in your nation, and the credit is yours for the very struggle for freedom that has been made possible to-day in India. The courage to suffer that has been aroused in our country carries with it an unconscious admiration for your own people in its very challenge. At heart it is a moral challenge, being sure of moral response in your mind when our claim to freedom is made real to you by our suffering.

"Such sufferings have won your admiration. You secretly feel shame at the enormities that you allow to be perpetrated in a state of panic upon a people who are no match for you in power. Let, then, the best minds of the East and West join hands and establish a truly human bond of friendship between England and India.'"

Just as Anil finished, his sister Asha came in from St Ursula's. She was always a welcome member of the Union Club, and had been its president in her second year. Now she was preparing for her examination and her attendance was less frequent. Among the Indian students at Oxford she was well known for her patriotism.

John Murray continued the conversation.

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"How is it," he asked, "that this repeated challenge of Tagore—to get the best minds to meet—is never taken up?"

"England is far too busy with her own concerns," said Safdar Ali impulsively. "If you put forward a business proposition, at once every one is on the alert. But talk about Persian or Arabic culture, and you won't get a single listener."

Asha was anxious that another passage should be read from Tagore. "I remember well," she said, "how we had to go an hour before the time in order to get a seat, when he gave the Hibbert Lectures in Oxford. The hall was crowded out. Couldn't you let me hear what you have chosen?"

I had left to the last the finest passage of all, which I had heard Tagore deliver at the Friends' House, in London. His speech had made a profound impression. I had watched the whole audience swayed by his appeal. For he spoke with prophetic earnestness, as though he were giving his parting message. He had taken the privilege of old age to utter the last words of a lover of the West, who had been deeply wounded in his love.

"In its relation," he had said, "to the people of the East, the aspect of Western character which has now come uppermost is not only insulting to us, but also to the West itself. Nothing could have been more unfortunate in the history of Man than this. At the moment when Europe

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came to our door the whole of Asia was asleep ; the darkness of night had fallen over her life. Her lights were dim, her voice mute. She had her wisdom shut up in her books. Thus the East was not ready to receive the West in all her majesty of soul. We have not seen that which was great in the West because we have failed to bring out the great that was in ourselves.

"In the lives of the best individuals in Western countries there is a love of humanity ; their keen intellect and indomitable will are both leagued together for human welfare. This reveals itself in loyalty to the cause of Truth, for which so many of them are ready to suffer martyrdom—often standing heroically alone against some fury of national insanity. When this wide human interest takes a moral direction, it grows into an intelligent service of mankind that can ignore all geographical limits and racial traditions.

"But what is most unfortunate for us is the fact that the advent of Europe into Asia has been accompanied not only by Science, which is Truth (and therefore welcome), but by the impious misuse of Truth for the violent purpose of self-seeking ; and this converts it into a disruptive force. . . . It is difficult for us to acknowledge what is best in European civilisation and accept it when we are humiliated. This has been the reason why the West has not yet come home to our heart, why we struggle

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to repudiate her culture. It is because we ourselves are under the dark shadow of her dominance. We need freedom; we need that generous vigour of receptivity which the sense of self-respect alone can give to us.

"Let us, the dreamers of the East and the West, keep our faith firm in the life that creates; in the power that hides its force and blossoms in beauty! Let us know that Science is great when it destroys Evil; but *not* great when the two enter into an unholy alliance.

"I believe in the individuals of the West; for on no account can I afford to lose my faith in Man. They also dream; they love; they intensely feel pain at the unholy rites of demon worship. Their lamps of sacrifice will burn bright along the great pilgrim track of the future, when the triumphal tower of skulls, heaped up in memory of war lords, has crumbled into dust."

VII

As Anil finished a silence fell on us all. We seemed to have listened to the cry of a soul in pain; a sensitive mind, which had come

between the fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites,

and was crushed and bruised and torn. No one can fail to recognise the magnanimity of Tagore's spirit while he thus speaks out with all his heart. There is also a noble restraint, as he tries to con-

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trol the sense of humiliation within. He does not weakly lay all the blame at the door of the West, but acknowledges the fact that when Europe came with its new message to Asia, the "East was not ready to receive the West in all her majesty of soul."

CHAPTER III

THE BRITISH POINT OF VIEW

I

AFTER the silence was broken, John Murray asked if he might put the case from the British point of view.

"We're entirely one with Tagore," he said, "in his plea for goodwill between the races. That is what we're aiming at, and we repudiate the doctrine of force. We don't look upon India any longer as a 'possession' of Great Britain, and we can now see much more clearly how insulting that word has been. The last thing we should desire would be to hold India in subjection to ourselves, if she can manage her own affairs."

"When did you learn those lessons?" asked Mulchand.

"The World War," John replied, "taught us many things. We're not so proud of our old 'imperialism' to-day. On that subject, for most of us, the Churchill School is out of date. We've learnt at last to consider the feelings of other people; and since the war-spirit is very closely connected with race supremacy, we're eager to repudiate that as well."

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"Why then," inquired Safdar, "do you insist on keeping everything still in your own hands by means of safeguards and reservations?"

"The main difficulty," John answered, "arises from quite another quarter. We have on our consciences the destiny of these countless millions of very poor people in India whom we've tried to protect from oppression. We sincerely feel that we've a duty towards them, which we can't relinquish until we're certain that it will be fulfilled by you after we've gone away."

"Aren't you there," Safdar questioned, "concealing from yourselves your real motive?"

"No," said John with emphasis. "The question raised in our minds is a vital one. It is this: What would happen to the Indian villagers, and especially the depressed classes, if we left to-morrow? Would oppression begin over again?"

"Isn't your own rule," asked Abdul Majid, "the worst form of oppression?"

"Not intentionally," said John. "But I'm thinking of something far different from what is happening in India to-day. Take a comparison, ready to hand, in China. The Chinese are a virile and capable people. Yet a single flood, four years ago, swept away and drowned more than two million cultivators, whose lives were lost owing to culpable negligence in failing to keep up the embankments. On another recent occasion a single famine destroyed millions of poor people, and many millions besides were

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driven by starvation to emigrate to Manchuria, with women and children dying all along the road. Such things used to happen in India ; but owing to scientific methods of rendering help the villagers have been saved in some measure from such disasters. Can we be quite certain, if we leave everything in Indian hands, that the standard of efficiency won't be lowered ? ”

“ We can only learn by experience,” Safdar answered. “ We *have* to take over responsibility—why not at once ? ”

“ At any other time,” said John, “ that answer would have satisfied me ; but now I'm not so certain. We're taking tremendous risks, and the welfare of millions is at stake.”

“ Yet all life's made up of taking risks,” came the quick reply from Anil. “ Sooner or later the responsibility must be ours ; for they're our people after all, not yours.”

“ Yes, I know that very well, but somehow that answer doesn't ease my mind in the least. The world's so upset in these days that we're all learning to put politics in the second place, and economics in the first. We simply can't afford to let things go to pieces, and then clean up the mess afterwards. In former times we used to believe in the old slogan of political freedom as the cure for every social ill ; but now we think more of food supply and unemployment. We're not so sure as we were that mere political changes will work wonders.”

“ But won't you let us learn those lessons for

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ourselves?" asked Anil; "why should you dictate?"

"Anil," said Alan, very seriously, "may we be absolutely open with each other? Can you assure us that there would not be open war between Hindus and Moslems if the British left, and that the 'untouchables' would not be left in the lurch? Please don't think these are lame excuses for hanging on."

"Well," said Anil, "as to Hindus and Moslems you have both in this room now, and you will find in all Indian student circles they work together quite happily. Then in the Labour Movement or the Women's Movement there is little or no communal friction. We know the older generation are often bigoted, and we admit they were all at sixes and sevens in the Round Table Conference. But I must remind you that we didn't elect those men to represent us. They were chosen by your Government. Anyway, we of the younger generation are working together. In India to-day the chief divisions are social rather than religious. That brings us to the 'untouchables.' You say you mustn't leave them in the lurch. But do you really look after their interests to-day? When big financial interests in London required a balanced Indian Budget, some years ago, you insisted on doubling the salt tax, which only hits our poorest people. We all told you not to do this, but the Viceroy insisted on it—and you've gone and certified it again this year!

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Does *that* show any love for our 'untouchables'? Once more, you were as anxious as possible to satisfy every objection of the Princes in order to get them into the new Constitution. But when the downtrodden subjects of the Princes appealed to you for justice, you refused to hear them, and so all the old evils of a feudal system remain as before.

"The truth is this," Anil continued, "we distrust your motives. You want to realise the full interest on all your money invested in India. You want to keep in your own hands every form of exploitation. You've safeguarded these things in your new India Bill. All this money goes back to England; it's not spent among our poor people in India—not a penny of it. Where, then, comes in your consideration for the 'untouchables'? Believe me, we are not the degraded inhuman beings Miss Mayo makes us out to be! We are human, just as you are, and we are humane also. Do let us avoid hypocrisy."

II

Alan saw in a moment, from Anil's growing excitement, that something had hurt him in the discussion. "I'm so sorry," he said. "I've hurt badly, Anil. I can see it. And you must forgive me. But I assure you that our own sympathy with your poor people is quite genuine. Please don't make a mistake there."

"Even then," Anil replied with more com-

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posure, "there's one thing we feel so much, that we can't ask for your help any longer. You always want to occupy the chief place. You can't work with us, or under us. You insist on being over us. That's why the present state of things has become intolerable."

"I grant that," Alan acceded. "But even there things are not as bad as they were. Indians now are taking the highest positions in the Civil Service, with English officers under them. And there's another point I should like to make. Can we be sure that the peace of India, on which the security of the civilised world depends, will continue after the British authority is withdrawn? The whole world seems going to pieces. Won't India fall into ruin if we depart? This isn't a mere smoke-screen, set up selfishly in order to keep things in our own hands."

"There we differ," said Anil.

"I'll tell you the truth, Anil," said Alan. "However much we may dislike Churchill's attitude, we have an uneasy feeling that he's right when he declares that we oughtn't hastily to make, what he calls, 'a solemn abdication and refusal of responsibility.' For opposite reasons from his, we're afraid to take risks. We cling on, as you say, to power; but it's not for power's sake. We'd only too gladly hand over everything, bag and baggage, if we could. Indeed, we've done this already in Canada and South Africa. But just as some of us regret now that we didn't make better provision in

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South Africa for the coloured races, so we feel now that we ought to make provision in India for the depressed classes."

III

It would be shortsighted on the part of those who feel intensely the need of immediate Swaraj, if they made light of these conscientious objections which some of the best Englishmen are putting forward. Furthermore, it would merely confuse the issue to indulge in wholesale condemnation of British rule, as if it had been an evil thing from beginning to end. Abdul Majid appeared anxious to take up that position, when John Murray forestalled him.

"You tell us," he said, "that because our rule in India is 'foreign' it has been altogether bad: but is this in accordance with the facts? First of all, there are abundant records left by Indians themselves stating in unequivocal terms the benefits derived from British rule in days gone by. Even if we deduct a large percentage for the conventional manner of speech common to that age, there is still first-hand testimony contrasting British rule with the hopeless anarchy which went before it. We've no right to doubt either the sincerity of these men, or their knowledge of the facts."

"But the debit on the other side," Abdul argued, "has far outbalanced those assets which we admit."

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"Then let's take a test case. Whenever the choice has been offered for a local area to be transferred from British India and placed in the territory of an Indian State, the people concerned have always preferred to remain in British territory. Doesn't this imply that British India is more advanced than the Indian States?"

"That couldn't be said of Mysore," Anil replied quickly. "No one would want to leave that State."

"There may be exceptions, I grant, which prove the rule; and Mysore is a big one. But don't you see how even to-day the Princes who wish to federate with British India are determined not to have their States represented by elected candidates. Only their own nominees will be appointed. How would you like that in British India?"

"The truth is," said Anil, "that the backwardness of the States, politically, is itself due to their being buttressed up by the British rulers. That is one of the greatest evils of your rule."

"Very well," said John, "let's leave that question, as I see it's controversial; but there's still one further mode of reckoning which I have kept to the last. It's purely historical, and seems therefore almost beyond the pale of controversy."

Anil listened with attention, while John set forward at length the following argument:

"Consider," he said, "the advance made in the nineteenth century under British rule through

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movements which sprang from the heart of the people. This period has been rightly called the Indian Renaissance. We see, from historical records, how art, literature, language, culture, and above all, religion, gained a new life. We can see, also, how this modern intellectual and spiritual impulse, acting from within, has broken down social and religious barriers. It has also produced outstanding personalities, who became world-famous and made Indian culture widely known in the West. Let any one consider India's place in the world of thought to-day, as compared with a century ago, and he will almost certainly come to the conclusion that this Renaissance couldn't have happened if it hadn't been for the impact of foreign rule, which broke down all barriers and opened the doors of India wide to the science and thought of the West."

IV

The argument may pause here for a moment, and certain conclusions be drawn from the discussion.

Any attempts, from the material side, to prove the benefits of foreign rule—such as the extension of irrigation, canals, railways—do not appear to carry final conviction. For evils may have been introduced along with them; and, in any case, such artificial works may be utilised for a time and then as rapidly disappear. Mesopotamia, long ago, made provision for myriads of

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the human race by means of its irrigation system. But nothing except a malarial swamp remains to-day. New Delhi, with its costly buildings set over against the hovels of the poor, is another of those ephemeral things that will either pass away, or else be used for a different purpose when foreign rule itself disappears. We have striking examples in Soviet Russia and Germany, where the palaces of Emperors have been turned into museums for the common people.

But the intangible things of the human spirit, which gave rise to the Indian Renaissance, are of a different order. They abide; they become the common property of mankind. Therefore, at that point, the argument quoted above did not go astray.

V

The presentment of the case which appears to be most nearly in accord with the facts of history is this:

The foreign British rule, which came by sea to India more than three centuries ago, had its primary importance in the annals of mankind owing to a concurrence of events. It differed from everything that had entered India before, and by its complete divergence gave the shock and stimulus needed to rouse, first of all, Bengal, and then the rest of India, out of a state of anarchy which might have ended in death.

At first, indeed, it only made the anarchy more

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rampant and the confusion worse confounded. For, during the early freebooting days of the Company's merchant-adventurers, the ruthless plunder of Bengal and Madras went on unchecked. This impoverished India and corrupted Great Britain through and through. Never, perhaps, did a great change in human affairs take place under worse auspices. The political life of England had sunk to its lowest ebb. The misery of India had also reached its lowest depths.¹

But, in spite of all this, which was so bad that it can hardly be overstated, there were very great men on either side who won through, and in this way changed the course of history and introduced a new epoch, which we call the Modern Age.

Bengal produced, during that period of decay, one of the most tenderly pathetic of her own poets, Ram Prasad. Beyond this, she gave birth to a world genius in Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

Great Britain was also able to bring forth, out of the corruption of those days, a vital religious movement under John Wesley, which led up to the abolition of slavery and other great humanitarian reforms. There were statesmen such as Burke in Parliament, and scholars like Sir William Jones in Bengal, who raised the standard both of political morality and intellectual culture. The biography of Warren Hastings, by Mervyn Davies, shows what a deep interest the first Governor-General took in the philosophy of

¹ See Note B.

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the East, and how he sought to mould his life upon it.¹

Starting from Bengal, where great personalities on either side gave the new impulse its creative power, the Indian Renaissance spread in wider and wider circles. The period also witnessed an advance in scientific thought in the West, which led on to all the vast discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was of the utmost importance to the human race as a whole that Asia should share in that advance as quickly as possible, so that there should be no time-lag between East and West, which would cruelly divide mankind. Bengal had the innate intellectual capacity and alertness of imagination which enabled her to make that effort.

At other epochs of human history, such as the beginning of the Christian era, Asia had taken the lead. When the soul of the brooding East made its own inner message known to the world through the Christian Church,

She heard it—the victorious West,
In crown and sword arrayed.
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shivered and obeyed.

A new life began, which we have inherited as our birthright to-day.

In the same way, when Europe took the lead, not by a conquest of the spirit, but through

¹ See Note C.

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scientific discovery, Bengal was the one country in the East which had still smouldering embers to be fanned into flame.

One other factor, mentioned by Tagore, helped to rekindle the intellectual fervour of Bengal. The literature of the Revolution Period in English Poetry was opened out before the eyes of the East just at the right moment of awakening. The passionate love of freedom, which runs through English poetry, was like new wine in its intoxicating power.

Long before China and Japan had become aware of these fresh springs of human thought, Bengal was wide awake; and the other parts of India were roused to action in their turn. Each language began to develop its own literature, following the footsteps of Bengal. When future historians look back at this Renaissance, they will make special reference to the revival of vernacular literature in every part of the country. For it shows how the fresh impulse of creative thought reached down to the masses of the common people and did not merely influence the tiny circle of the intellectuals.

VI

But just because the shock thus given to India by the impact of foreign rule, at a time when vitality was at a low ebb, had such a penetrating power, the danger was all the greater of its becoming destructive, if the shock itself was too pro-

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longed. For as soon as ever the intellectual life-stream in the body-politic ran in full flow once more and circulation had been restored, the employment of any further stimulus from without would check the natural processes of recovery, and in this way do more harm than good.

No doctor would wish to use artificial respiration, or employ a violent stimulus, after the patient has begun to recover. He would rather, if he were a good physician, leave Nature herself to do her own healing work.

VII

Thus far the argument has had its double aspect. It acknowledges the value of the stimulus that India had received, yet it shows with equal clearness how grave the disaster may be if this subjection is further prolonged.

The crying need now is for the transfer, as rapidly as possible, of responsibility into Indian hands. Not less, but more responsibility is what India needs, because the form of rule by the foreigner has gone on too long. It has served its turn. To carry it on further would merely undo whatever good may have been done before.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

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VIII

"Have you ever thought," I asked, before we parted, "of the analogy to India in British history, when Saxon England for a time came under the Normans?"

"Do you mean to say," asked Safdar incredulously, "that England herself was ever in subjection to a foreign rule?"

"Yes," I replied; "the Norman was in every way a foreigner, and he did any amount of harm. But the Saxon character, which had to submit to this alien rule for a time, had its own serious defects. It had become isolated from the intellectual life of the continent of Europe. Nothing broke down this isolation and overcame Saxon sluggishness more effectively than subjection to the Norman."

"Surely," said Safdar, "that was because the Norman and Saxon were so near akin. There was no colour bar."

"I grant you," I replied, "that the analogy is imperfect. But the Norman shook the Saxon out of his mental lethargy and awakened a new intellectual life. We English to-day owe an immense debt of 'awakening' to the Norman Conquest, just as I believe you in India to-day owe a debt of 'awakening' to the British occupation."

"At the same time, history tells me plainly that if the foreign rule of the Norman had been prolonged, and England had become merely an

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integral part of a Norman empire, the good effect of the earlier impact would have been destroyed.

"In exactly the same way, I can see clearly that if the foreign rule of the British in India is prolonged, the good effect of the earlier impact will be destroyed. For this reason, I can never wish that India shall remain for all time, without her own consent, an 'integral part of the British Empire.' When she is strong enough, she must choose her own course."

Alan ended the discussion. "As Christians," he said, "we have one clear duty. We have to follow the Golden Rule which Christ has set before us. We have to do to others what we should wish done to ourselves. That's the only final solution of the moral tangle between India and Britain."

We decided, before we parted, to consider next the chief moral evils of subjection. We should discuss, also, some of the counter-balancing factors which had been present right through the British period and had led on to the Indian Renaissance.

CHAPTER IV

THE MORAL EVIL OF SUBJECTION

I

“WHAT would you regard,” I asked, “as the greatest of all the moral evils which arise out of foreign rule?”

“The fact,” Anil answered, “that it is foreign! It’s not our own. So it tends to destroy personality. It degrades us by forcing upon us a second-rate imitation of another people. We hate ourselves for this imitation, and yet we go on with it. Thus it humiliates us all the while. When, further, the foreign rule is made to depend on brute force and abject fear, it becomes altogether vicious. The poison eats right into the soul.”

“Mr Churchill,” said Safdar, “never suffered from loss of national freedom. He has never felt the misery of belonging to a ‘Dependency.’ He has never experienced the bondage of racial subjection. Therefore it costs him nothing to paint a glowing picture about a serene and splendid harmony of peace and justice. Why, he has never lived in India, except as a young subaltern! So the phrases he uses are quite empty. For there’s no real peace and order based

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on equal laws between the white and coloured people. The white man remains privileged throughout. If he kills or injures one of us in India, or an African in Africa, he gets an entirely different punishment from that meted out to a coloured person who kills or injures a white man. There's no equal justice."

"If only Mr Churchill," said Anil, "could look below the surface, he'd soon realise the canker that is eating out the heart of self-respect among us. That's why every young man and woman in India is determined to stand it no longer."

"How did the fact come home to you?" asked Alan.

"Once, long ago," said Anil, "a sentence of Sir John Seeley suddenly struck me like an electric shock :

"Subjection for a long time to a foreign yoke is one of the most potent causes of national deterioration."

"When I read that sentence it roused me as nothing had ever done before ; because I could see in a flash how true it was. The harm that's done doesn't begin at once. Only after a long time can the evil be clearly traced. What's more, it's injurious to both sides. It's the opposite of what Shakespeare says about mercy. Instead of being twice blest, it's twice cursed. It curses him who rules, and him who is ruled."

"The worst of it is," said Safdar, "it's quite impossible to make people understand in England

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what British rule means in India. They won't believe what we say."

"How would *you* explain it?" I asked.

"You come from a country with a cold climate thousands of miles away and live out there in isolation. You're completely out of touch with our daily life. By the way, that's our fault as much as yours, for we're a clannish lot ourselves. The gulf grows wider, and you make no effort to cross it. You're not interested in our art, or literature, or music, or religion."

"That's rather a bad character you give us," said John Murray.

"Then look what it means for *us*!" said Mohanlal, who was a new Hindu member of the group. "We've always got to be under restraint when any official is about. We've got to put up with all sorts of humiliations and bow constantly to your over-ruling, though we know the country much better than you do. Indeed, we have often to watch one mistake after another being made through sheer ignorance on your part, without saying one word to put things right."

"Do you have to live a double life like that?" asked Neil Munro.

"There's no help for it," said Mulchand. "If you want to get on you have to do it, however much you may dislike it. Every day we have to think of these things and weakly submit to them, for the most part. Don't think we don't know our own weakness. We're only too conscious of it. But what are we to do?"

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"May I tell you," I asked, "without giving offence, a story about what happened to me one day in India some time ago?"

"Please do," said Mulchand, "and we'll let you know afterwards whether it's typical or not."

"Once," I said, "while talking with an Indian friend, I suddenly noticed the change which came over his face as he stood beside me. He had become aware, by a glance of the eye, of the approach of the Deputy Commissioner. Up to that time he'd been perfectly natural with me, and we had carried on a frank conversation together. Then in the twinkling of an eye, as the British official approached who'd got full power in his hands to promote or degrade at will, his whole manner changed and he became all smiles and effusiveness towards the official. As far as I could judge there wasn't a single sincere word in all that he said while he spoke to the Deputy Commissioner in my presence.

"As soon as we were quite alone," I continued, "I challenged him about it as a friend. He told me that he hated himself for such double conduct, but what was he to do? As long as the rule of the foreigner continued, this 'kow-towing' to the ruler who had all power in his own hands had to continue. Sooner or later, every one who wished to stand well with the Government was obliged to act thus."

"How long ago," asked Mulchand, "did that happen?"

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"More than twenty years ago," I answered, "when the National Movement was still in its infancy."

"I thought so," he said, and remained silent.

"It was chiefly due," said Safdar, "to Mahatma Gandhi that this has now been stopped. He first gave us the power of saying 'No,' and abiding by our decision."

"Yes," Mulchand agreed, "the National Movement has swept away a lot of hypocrisy. But it hasn't made the British rulers themselves any more friendly. For that old submissiveness appealed to their weaker side, while the modern spirit of independence makes them always suspect that we're up to mischief."

"When our Professor of English," said Anil, "at the Presidency College used to teach us Wordsworth, we tried to ask him awkward questions. There were some lines in the *Golden Treasury* which we all knew by heart. 'Sir,' we'd ask him, 'can you please tell us what Wordsworth meant when he wrote,

We must be free or die.

Is that meant only for Englishmen, or does it apply to Indians as well?' He used to get awfully confused when we put to him questions like that."

Alan laughed rather uneasily. "I can see where the fault lay," he answered. "If we'd only made an attempt to settle down and assimilate ourselves to the life of your people, and thus

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make ourselves one with you, things might have been very different."

"That's true," said Abdul Majid. "The Moghuls did that, and for a long time everything went very well indeed."

Alan remained thoughtful and we all paused in the discussion. "The one thing," he said at last, "that's drawn me to go out to do mission work in China, rather than India, is bound up with this very point. Out there, in China, it is easier for us to adopt Chinese dress and to live, not as strangers, but in the heart of the country among the common people. There's no British rule there which brings 'awkward questions' with it every moment."

"Mere dress by itself is of very little importance," said Anil, "but it means a great deal when it implies the desire to be one in spirit and not racially aloof. I do wish you'd change your mind, Alan, and come out to India. We shouldn't put those 'awkward questions' to you : for we know you're on our side."

II

Asha now joined in the discussion. "You can't tell," she said, "how weakening it is for any of us to indulge in self-pity and then go on to make excuses for our own failings. You've only got to read modern psychology to see what happens. If I'd my own way I'd try to get every Indian worker to promise never to

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throw the blame on others. It makes us moral invalids."

"But don't we really owe our weakness to the British domination?" asked Safdar.

"Let me put it round the other way," said Asha. "Don't we really owe the British domination to our weakness?"

"I never thought of that," said Safdar. "How stupid of me! Asha, you've taught me a lesson."

"I wish I had," said Asha laughing. "I've repeated that lesson a hundred times, but it hasn't gone home yet. This self-pity is our great national fault. That's why we women mustn't let you indulge in it."

"What would you say was *our* national fault?" I asked.

"Oh, you," she replied. "Here at Oxford you're quite decent; but in India you're—I don't know what to call you!"

Everybody laughed at Asha's lame conclusion.

"Do tell us what you really think," said Alan.

"Shall I tell you?" asked Asha. "I think I've got it now exactly. You're never yourselves! That's your great fault! Oh, what *could* be more artificial than your life out in India, where you hold yourselves aloof from us, in most places, and live in a tiny club circle of your own? I wonder how you can endure it!"

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III

An incident had once brought home to me very forcibly indeed this factor of aloofness, and I ventured to relate it; for at the time it had made me think out many things afresh from the Christian standpoint.

An important post had been vacant and I had strongly advised a brilliant young Cambridge scholar, who was a prominent member of the Student Christian Movement, to go out to India as a Government servant in the Education Department rather than as a missionary. Circumstances made the latter vocation almost impossible. While putting the opportunity before him, I had explained how affectionate Indian students were when they met with real goodness in their teacher. He was quite eager to go out, but a few days later was thrown back by the words of a retired civilian, who had spent his whole life in India. This older man, whom he deeply respected, had told him that if he *did* go out it would be wise to hold himself aloof and not come closely into touch with the students. His casual remark was perhaps quite kindly meant, but the foreign attitude of a ruling race, which it implied, so disgusted the younger man that he changed his plans and went elsewhere.

This story seemed almost incredible to Alan. "Do you really mean to say," he asked, "that this senior officer actually told him that he would

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have to hold himself aloof if he went out as a teacher of young students?"

"Yes," I said, "that's a perfectly true story. But, just as Mulchand said about his own countrymen, things have moved a lot since then. We look back on the years since the World War and they seem to us hateful, miserable years, full of bitter quarrel and dispute; but much good has come out of them after all. *You* are not by any means so weak and feeble as you were. And we—well, we've moved a great deal too."

"*Some* of you," said Anil, "but by no means all. The trouble is we have Diehard Englishmen in India. There are still people who are ready to turn us out of railway compartments in order to keep up British prestige, and others who glare at us if we don't show the old slavish respect. We never know when we're going to meet them, and this puts our minds in a perpetual ferment."

"Not here, I hope?" asked John Murray.

"Oh, no," said Anil. "Here we're as free as the air we breathe. You can hardly realise what a difference that makes! Only think, if we talked like this in India——"

"Why, what would happen?" asked Alan quickly.

"Oh, it couldn't be done over there. The atmosphere's entirely different. Here we're perfectly free. That's one of the great glories of Oxford, which makes us love her so much. Oxford gives us perpetual beauty and a perfect sense of freedom."

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IV

A sudden thought had once on a sea voyage come home to me like a flash, and I determined at this point to bring it forward as a part of the discussion.

"There's no one in the world," I said, "who'd be happier to see India free than I should; for I can trace every day more clearly how this prolonged subjection to a foreign rule is injuring something vital in her soul. That's the tragedy of it all, and Mr Churchill never in the least realises what it implies when he uses that hateful word 'possession.' Isn't it really the same issue over again as that of the slave traffic a century ago? No man, it was said then, has the right to 'possess' the person of another man. In the same way, we've got to understand with burning conviction to-day, a century later, that no *nation* has the right to 'possess' another people who are of a different character and race. Human personality is involved. To put it in moral terms, the person of a nation is sacred."

"How ever did you come to put these two things together?" asked Safdar, with enthusiasm. "That's quite a new thought to me. I'd never seen things in that light before. But it's perfectly true."

"It was off West Africa, just as we approached Sierra Leone. Slavery had been carried on there in days gone by. My own country had gained the very lucrative monopoly of the slave traffic.

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The slave ships, which plied to and fro, on what was called the 'middle passage,' were British. Yet when once the wrong done to the person of human beings was clearly understood, Great Britain performed one of the most wholly unselfish acts in her long history. She abolished slavery at a very great cost."

"I see the analogy," said Anil. "But do you really think that she will perform an even more unselfish act to-day and set India free?"

"If once," I replied, "it was made absolutely clear that India was unjustly treated, owing to this retention of power by Great Britain, I am sure our people would do what they did before. They would release India from bondage. But the issue has become so involved, that even the most earnest Christian men and women somehow feel doubtful. They still feel that British rule is protecting the poorest of the poor. There is the real difficulty. They want to do the right thing by India, but they are confused. They wish to be truly Christian, but they don't know how to act. If they saw clearly that there was a united moral demand for further freedom, from rich and poor alike in India, then they would abolish this bondage just as they abolished slavery itself a century ago."

"Obviously," said Neil Munro, "we have to go much deeper still into this whole question of subjection. We haven't got to the bottom of it yet. If what you and Seeley and others say is perfectly true, and foreign rule leads on at last

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to national deterioration, then your analogy with the abolition of slavery holds good. Just as we mustn't retain the 'person' of an individual by force, so we mustn't hold by force the 'person' of another people."

"The argument would be greatly strengthened, said John Murray, "if you could prove that the injury done to the foreign ruler is no less grave than that which is done to the alien subject who is ruled. This would then imply that Great Britain herself might become demoralised if the present subjection continues."

"That's what's really happening to-day," I said. "Moral deterioration on both sides is going on. The life lived by Englishmen and English-women is artificial, and so is the Indian life also."

"Could you give us," asked Alan, "another example from your own experience, like that one about the senior officer? It seemed to me quite incredible that an Englishman could have acted like that."

"Here's the first that occurs to me. It happened in the War, when all letters were censored. A kindly old retired general, at one of the ports, who was doing war service, invited me to see him and told me he had been looking through all my private letters. 'I hope you found them interesting,' said I. 'Oh, yes,' said he, 'they're very interesting indeed. But I find you write to your Indian friends exactly as you do to your own family. Now, as one who knows the East

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much better than you do, I want to tell you one thing. You shouldn't write to your Indian friends like that. There are certain things we can discuss among ourselves; but it's not safe to discuss them with "natives"—especially in war time."

"Good heavens!" Neil blurted out. "Did he say that?"

Alan turned to his friend Anil, "Just imagine my treating *you* like that, Anil! What would you think of me?"

Anil laughed. "You couldn't do it, Alan," he said, "even if you tried."

"Time's up," said Neil, "just as things were getting to the point. Couldn't we continue the same subject next time?"

"I've got a paper already written," said I, "on 'Anglo-India.' It was put together about twelve years ago, when the Non-Co-operation Movement was active."

"Oh, do read it!" said Asha eagerly. "We'd love to hear it. But I hope you don't merely speak of your own British failings. You must speak of ours too, for we need plain speaking very badly."

"You must remember," I said, "how long ago it was written. Much of it is now out of date. But it does show what happened, and what might happen again, if the old spirit in any way revived."

CHAPTER V

"ANGLO-INDIA" ¹

I

THE discussion was thus held over, and at the next meeting I read the following paper :

"India is a country which can never be suitable for the average Englishman to settle down in. Owing to difficulties of climate, it involves for him, in most cases, enforced separation from his wife and children during a great part of the year. For this and other reasons, his character becomes subtly modified in unperceived directions ; and the change which has taken place is at once noticed when he retires and lives at home.

"There has thus been evolved a type of character which in English literature has been called 'Anglo-Indian.' It has met with good-natured chaff from such novelists as Thackeray on account of its eccentricities. Among these have been a short temper, imperious voice, and an autocratic manner of addressing servants.

"If these peculiarities were analysed they

¹ The word is here used, in its old literary sense, to denote the environment of one who has spent his life in India and developed a certain type of character.

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would be found mainly to be due to the submissiveness with which the 'Sahib' had been treated by his Indian servants and subordinates, over whom he had exercised unlimited sway during the time he was in office abroad.

"Such perpetual domination over another race, accepted with submission, is in itself a demoralising process, for it leads insensibly to an exaggerated humility on the one hand and an equally exaggerated self-importance on the other. India is the worst place in the world for such distinctions to be emphasised, because these very things have all along been its curse in the past, and they need to be got rid of rather than encouraged in modern times.

"History shows how the Brahmin ascendancy led to one type of racial subservience, which left as its evil legacy millions of so-called 'untouchables.' The Moghul supremacy led on to servility of another kind, carrying with it fatal results. All sorts of princes, great and small, added a third form of debasement, owing to a feudal despotism unrelieved by modern ideas of liberty and justice. With the British came, last of all, a new ascendancy, along with its inevitable train of hangers-on and time-servers, eager to please the official in order to get rich and earn a title. Those Englishmen who came out, unspoilt by race and colour prejudice, soon began to think of their own prestige. They learnt in this manner to accept the position of a new ruling caste.

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“ Yet in spite of all this evil growth, notable friendships between Indian and British have been common. For there have always been those who have successfully resisted the noxious atmosphere around them and have chosen their Indian friends and associates wisely and well, treating them with a generous courtesy which surmounted altogether any barrier of race or caste. Some of the truest friendships in the world have been those between individuals who have broken down every distinction of race through mutual love and respect.

II

“ Modern Indians, who have imbibed to the full the new national spirit, are in open revolt against any kind of outward expression of servility towards the ruling race. Indeed, they call it by the harsh name of ‘ slave mentality ’ which Mahatma Gandhi has made current coin. They are justly indignant at the gross flattery which went on in earlier days, and they encourage in all with whom they come in contact a manly independence which is clean and wholesome when compared with the impure atmosphere of false submissiveness which went before.

“ Above all, they realise that political freedom must be inward as well as outward, if they would become a truthful, sincere, and self-respecting people.

III

"When I came out for the first time to India, my associates at once sought to drill me into the mentality of the 'Sahib.'

"'Never,' they said, 'for a moment forget that in this country, as an Englishman, you depend entirely upon your prestige. You must never let that down; for if that goes, everything goes with it. Therefore, though you have come out as a missionary, you are an Englishman first. You will do an incalculable injury to your fellow-countrymen if you let your sympathies carry you away and allow any "native" to become familiar with you. Never give way to them. They don't understand it; and they will take it as a clear token of your own weakness. None of them are to be trusted in the same way that you would trust an Englishman. Above all, never forget that we have English ladies out here, and the least familiarity, if you allow it, is going to do harm to their position in this country, which entirely depends on every Englishman keeping up his white prestige.'

"It was racial poison of this kind that was distilled into my ear, night and day. Fortunately, an antidote was always ready to hand in the words of Christ, my Master, and I was able to survive those first few months, spent in language study at Simla, without any serious infection. But the strain of it is a very severe ordeal for a young Englishman to pass through. Repeated

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small doses of this toxin have a terribly depressing effect even on one who has come out with a strong determination fearlessly to fight under Christ's banner.

“ A story will make this clear. One of my English friends told me that he had come out on business to a great commercial firm in India. He had formed, while at Oxford, a close friendship with an Indian student who was a member of his own college ; so he had written beforehand telling him that he was expecting to see a good deal of him on his arrival in India. His friend met him at the steamer and the old college comradeship was renewed. They dined together and were often seen in each other's company.

“ Very soon, however, his conduct was noticed by his fellow-countrymen, who warned him that he was not properly upholding his British character, and that his actions were being severely criticised at the Club. One of the senior partners took him aside and rebuked him.

“ ‘ Look here,’ he said, ‘ you are young ; you don't understand this country yet and our position in it. You can't carry on your Oxford friendship with that ‘ native ’ out here. It's not done ! ’

“ ‘ But,’ said my friend, ‘ he is a member of my own college.’

“ ‘ We can't help that,’ said the other. ‘ These things aren't tolerated out here by decent people.’

“ Some of those who come out from England surrender at once in the face of a heavy frontal

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attack of this kind. Now and again, however, a really brave spirit makes a good fight, just as this young Englishman did. For he gallantly refused to give up his Indian friend and was boycotted in consequence.

"But human nature, after all, has its gregarious instincts, and in these racial conflicts, with their divided loyalties, the struggle is never ended ; and there is no place for a non-combatant. That is the deep tragedy of the whole matter, when once hostilities begin.

IV

"It ought, long ago, to have become abundantly evident to the Civil Service, which had the unchallenged conduct of Indian affairs in its own hands, that in any circumstance this unnatural submissiveness would not continue, and also that when the revolt began, its reaction was likely to be overwhelming.

"The reaction has now come. No nationally-minded Indian to-day will submit to the old 'Sahib' attitude. The thoroughly bad habit, that used to be so common, of employing flattery as a subtle weapon of defence against this arrogance, is now only used by those who are paid subordinates. The servants, who still cluster round the 'Sahib,' with little work to do, not seldom continue to exploit him, if his weakness for flattery lays him open to attack. They have learnt to know every foible and to play upon each of these

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in turn. It is a cruel game—a kind of defence mechanism, that ought to have been abandoned long ago, and would have been left behind in any normal state of society.

“This undermining of character on both sides is the worst nemesis that has arisen out of all the numerous evils that have been introduced with foreign rule. At the same time, it needs to be recorded that, even with racial feeling as strong as it is to-day, if any Englishman or woman is prepared to drop the ‘superior’ attitude and be perfectly natural and human, there are no retainers in the world more loyal and devoted than Indian servants.

“How utterly inconsiderate this forceful upholding of racial prestige may become can hardly be imagined by those who have never seen it practised. It appears to override all the finer instincts in our own characters.

“‘I hate this country,’ has been a passionate word which I have heard many times over, and I have wished to reply with very deep conviction, ‘Then you can only do harm by staying here, and you should, if possible, go home at once.’

V

“It seems as if the cumbrous traditions of the past had strangely paralysed any initiative in the reform of these bad manners. Therefore the old abuses of an Englishman’s power die very hard. Now and then an altogether wholesome change

is ordered from above, such as that which forbade the use of the objectionable word 'native' in any public document. But even such official orders appear to have had but little effect upon the daily conversation that goes on when Englishmen and women are alone.

"Lest I should be thought to be exaggerating, let me relate an incident which happened to me some years ago in Delhi. I had gone daily to call on one of the leading gentlemen of the city, a man of culture and refinement. We used to read English poetry together, and he had become my intimate friend. He was much older than I was, and of high repute in the city. One day I asked him to take me in his carriage to the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow for some purpose. He did so, and his carriage was stopped at the outer gate of the compound, which was some distance from the house. To get out at that spot would have entailed a walk in the blazing sun, without any protection from its rays, and it was approaching midday heat. So I asked my friend to tell his driver to drive on up to the house. He said to me with shame that he could not do this: he would be turned back, for Indians had to approach the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow on foot. The thing was so monstrous that at first I treated it as a joke, but it was nothing of the kind. It was one of the ways of 'keeping the native in his proper place.'

"My old friend was gentleness itself, but his

eyes blazed with fire as he told me how these ‘foreigners’ insult them in this manner. While speaking to me he had never used that word ‘foreigner’ before with reference to Englishmen. At heart he was loyal to the ideal of British rule and he had a deep veneration for Queen Victoria, who was to him the embodiment of all that was good. But petty tyrannies like these, exercised by those who strut across life’s stage wrapped round in brief authority for a few moments, cancel out a large credit balance of goodwill.

“ When I challenged the D.C. about his action he said, in weak self-defence, that it had been the custom in the Punjab for ‘native’ gentlemen to wait in that manner, and he did not see his way to change it. Let me state at once that such discourtesies are much less frequent now.

“ The result of all this action and reaction has been visible in recent years. Nationally-minded Indians have learnt to assert themselves, not seldom in an exaggerated manner, which reveals by its own excess how sadly the balance has been upset. Englishmen, on their side, have begun to understand that they cannot any longer take liberties as they used to do in the past. They are more on their guard and less autocratic than before.

“ Outwardly, therefore, there has been an improvement in the general situation, especially among higher official circles. But while certain unwholesome things have thus been finally abandoned, the actions and examples of those

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in higher authority have not been sufficient in themselves to bring about the desired result of true friendly relations.

"H. W. Nevinson, whose generous spirit had been stirred to righteous indignation by what he saw of 'Anglo-India' many years ago, proclaimed the urgent need for 'what our forefathers called "conversion"—a change of heart.' Mere prohibition cannot effect this; and not seldom there has been left behind no change of heart at all, but an inward contempt of all things Indian, which finds an outlet at the Club.

VI

"There is one new feature which needs to be mentioned in a paragraph by itself, because its all-pervading influence is now manifestly apparent, and it has led not only to racial, but also to moral antipathy.

"The rapid spread of the film industry and the establishment of cinemas which cater especially for the middle classes, have brought about a revulsion of feeling against the West which has added to the general confusion. For the last vestige of respect is destroyed, when films of Western life, illustrating all that is base and brutal in it, are exhibited day after day, and night after night, to a perpetual stream of young people. It would therefore be entirely wrong to underrate the influence that this new factor is exercising over Young India.

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VII

" While I have set down, in unqualified terms, the bad customs which have been kept up in India by a false sense of prestige, it needs to be repeated with emphasis that there are officials who detest this anti-Indian racial spirit and have done what they could to stand out against it. These men, and their wives also, have been the soul of courtesy towards Indians with whom they have come in contact. Still further, there are signal examples of those who in times of grave calamity have been ready to put every selfish consideration on one side and sacrifice even life itself in the service of the poor. However bitterly Indians have suffered from the racial arrogance of others, they have never been slow to acknowledge this aspect of British rule embodied in individuals whom they admire."

CHAPTER VI

THE LIBERAL PRINCIPLE

I

THE picture of Anglo-Indian society which I had drawn in my paper would be incomplete if I were to leave it as it stands. For all along there has been a noble tradition which has struggled to represent worthily in India the higher principle of fellowship which Christ's teaching so clearly embodies. Since the disaster of the World War, which shattered for a time the larger mind of Europe, two currents of thought—the liberal and the racial—have constantly come into conflict, but the outcome of the struggle as yet has remained uncertain.

At Allahabad, the two great rivers of Northern India, the Ganges and Jumna, meet. For some space, one stream can be traced by a brown, mud-laden current, while the other remains almost blue. The analogy is, of course, imperfect; but hitherto we have chiefly been tracing what may be called the "racial" current, as it runs strong and carries with it much decaying matter which needs to be thrown aside. But we can at the same time distinguish the

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"liberal" current, with its clearer waters, making its way through every obstacle in its onward flow.

II

This "liberal" tradition in British rule had been chosen for our next discussion. Meanwhile my own paper on "Anglo-India" had been circulated and had come in for much criticism. Neil Munro had read it and did not like it.

"You've been far too hard," he complained, "on the average British official. My own ancestors have been connected with India for some generations, and I can even trace a distant relationship with Sir Thomas Munro himself, so that I'm not likely to err on the conservative side. But surely the racial complex hasn't been so widespread as you've made out; and there have been thousands of officials and others all along determined to help forward the cause of political freedom in India."

"We're just about to discuss this 'liberal' view," was my reply. "But don't underestimate the strength of the racial bias; for it has been the curse of British rule in India from the very first. Why, your own ancestor, Sir Thomas Munro, found this out more than a century ago. (I looked up the passage.) Here is what he says:

"Foreign conquerors have treated the natives with violence, and often with great cruelty, but

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none has treated them with so much scorn as we ; none has stigmatised the whole people as unworthy of trust ; as incapable of honesty ; and as fit to be employed only where we cannot do without them. It seems to be not only ungenerous, but impolitic, to debase the character of a people fallen under our dominion.'

"Such a quotation," said I, "shows that this scornful contempt of the Indian, about which Sir Thomas writes, is of very long standing. The only thing that saved the situation was that liberal statesmen were found who detested whole-heartedly such conduct towards the people of another race, and were convinced that the only way forward was through equality freely acknowledged in every concern."

Anil supported my position. He knew this history period well. "The great Victorians," he said, "always assumed that the day would come when India would decide freely her own destiny. But since the War, with its repressive spirit, even to speak about separation from the British Empire is regarded as 'seditious' ! Yet those earlier statesmen definitely faced that possibility without any reservation whatever."

"Can you prove that ?" asked Neil. "It's a very important point. I've never heard it made before."

"Yes," answered Anil. "Sir Henry Lawrence uses these very words : '*When the connection between Britain and India ceases.*' Surely that means separation. He adds the prayer

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that, whenever the time should come, it might happen, 'not with convulsions, but with mutual esteem and affection.' That was a noble aim, and we can still keep the same hope before us to-day."

Neil returned to his original proposition. He urged that the racial discrimination, about which we had been talking, had played very little part in Anglo-Indian history. Safdar Ali strongly dissented. He told how his own father, an old man, had been assaulted on the railway. "I can assure you," he said, "these things are by no means over yet. Instances happen every day that are never reported."

Mohanlal agreed that the evil was still rampant, but qualified this by saying that in higher official circles an entirely different attitude had begun to prevail. He praised, especially, the recent Viceroys, who had taken a strong line about courtesy and good manners. They would not tolerate the least atom of rudeness, and this had set a salutary example at headquarters.

"To me," said Alan, "the whole idea of race prejudice is so vulgar and coarse and brutal that I can hardly believe such snobbery ever occurs. I can't even dream of an Englishman acting in that manner; and yet you all make it perfectly clear that a monstrous scandal exists, and I only wonder how you've been patient so long."

Anil turned to his friend with affection. "Alan," he said warmly, "you haven't got the

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least touch of it yourself. The moment we met you we knew it, and that's why we trust you. But we feel it at once in others."

"Perhaps we'd better get on to the main subject," I suggested, "and take up what I've called the 'liberal' tradition."

"Won't you fire away, then?" asked John.

"No," said I, "let Anil open the discussion."

"It's quite clear," said Anil, "that Burke's protest pioneered the way to a cleaner rule in India. He was the real hero of the eighteenth century, and we in India have kept our hero-worship for him, and also for Lord Ripon in the nineteenth; and we're not far wrong in both cases. After Burke, we have a succession of other great men, Munro, Metcalfe, Elphinstone, Macaulay, Bentinck, Lawrence. There were outstanding men also in Bengal—Ram Mohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Maharshi, Keshub, Ramkrishna, Vivekananda.¹ Other parts of India awoke later. Swami Dayananda roused the North. But I mustn't get on too far, because I want to make my earlier point quite clear. It is this. They looked forward to the time when India should be free to make her own choice. They believed in political freedom, not in political bondage."

"How on earth," asked John, "had they got as far as that a century ago? Why, they were miles ahead of where we stand to-day!"

"You forget this disastrous World War and its reactions," said I, breaking in. "That set-

¹ See Note G.

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back of the War has to be taken into account all along the line. Then you must remember also the fine liberalism of those early Victorian days. It was the era of the Reform Acts and the abolition of slavery. Freedom was stirring the hearts of men, and there were statesmen ready at hand to promote the spirit of freedom. Ram Mohan Roy felt it when he landed in England. It was a tragedy that he died at that critical time; for great men make human history, and he was very great indeed."

"What brought all this to an end?" asked Alan.

"The Mutiny," I answered.

"But wasn't that for us, in India, a fight for freedom?" asked Abdul Majid.

"There were such gross provocations that a fight almost *had* to come. The racial evil on the British side had increased tenfold and had become wellnigh intolerable in its arrogance. But it was a sordid struggle in its origin, excited by human follies and human lies as thick and gross as those of the last World War, from which we are all suffering to-day. No, if it had been a real struggle for independence, it would have gone much further. Let us hope such a 'war to the finish' will never have to be fought out, with all the inhuman lethal weapons which are being devised by science to-day. Mahatma Gandhi has been like a 'voice crying in the wilderness,' telling us that the only warfare God can bless is a *moral* warfare, and this can

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never be decided by poison gas and picric acid bombs."

"What do you yourself make of the Mutiny, then?" asked Safdar Ali.

"It was a thunderbolt and an earthquake combined," I replied, "and it has deeply infected the very air with hatred ever since. The brutal deeds, at the outset, committed by the mutineers had already been recorded; but Dr E. J. Thompson's book, called *The Other Side of the Medal*, has now made clear the brutalities which followed from our own side. Those have to be honestly acknowledged and admitted, because the racial poison they engendered has never been eliminated from our blood ever since. It has created Jallianwala Baghs and other horrors."

"May I come in to your discussion?" asked someone at the door, and Hara entered. He was one of the few Japanese members of the Union Club, and we welcomed him warmly.

"We are just being told," said Neil, as Hara took his seat, "that all war in modern times is an unmitigated curse, and that the racial spirit is a vile poison, which maddens men's minds till they brutally kill one another. Is that so?"

Hara smiled, but refused to be drawn into the discussion.

"Britain," said Abdul Majid, "will never let India go unless she is forced to do so?"

"Didn't we abolish slavery?" asked Neil Munro. "Was that forced?"

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"No," Majid answered, "that was a purely unselfish act. But will it ever be repeated?"

"There's no reason," said I, "why it shouldn't. But let's see what really happened in India, after the Mutiny. Our histories rightly tell us a good deal about Lord Canning—'Clemency Canning' as the Europeans nicknamed him in anger—but the greatest asset among the Indian village people was the character of Victoria the Good. The story of her long widowhood, her devotion to her husband, her deep religious faith, and her love of the Indian people travelled very far. I've traced it in most unlikely places."

"So have I," said Mohanlal. "There's one story from my own experience. In a village not far away from us there was a very aged priest, with white hair and beard, loved by everybody for his goodness. On one occasion an innocent lad was cruelly imprisoned on a false charge owing to police corruption. At first the old priest wouldn't believe it; but when the boy's mother came to him weeping and told him it was true, he said: 'Now I know that Queen Victoria is dead. Such a thing would not have happened if she had been alive.'"

This incident struck me, and I told a somewhat similar story concerning a deeply-revered old friend, Munshi Zaka Ullah of Delhi.

His own life had nearly been forfeited, in spite of his innocence, in the reprisals which followed the sack of Delhi. An English officer saved

him. For a time his heart was broken by the horrors he had been through, but at last he rallied from the shock and spent many years in writing his Urdu History, called *Victoria Nama*. He wished to show that only through Queen Victoria's goodness had the spirit of hatred been restrained and a new order of righteousness established. He felt, in a sense, that he owed his life to the good Queen. Her great Proclamation of 1858, declaring racial and religious equality as the basis of her rule, formed the title-page of his book. The most interesting thing is that the story of the good Queen is as well known in African kraals as it is in Indian villages."

"What destroyed all this goodwill?" asked John.

"First of all there was the Partition of Bengal," said Anil. "But that was partly remedied before the War; and in the War itself we did our utmost to help the Allied Cause, sincerely believing it to be the cause of freedom. We made no sordid bargains with Great Britain; but we were absolutely certain that if we helped to win the War, we should gain our own Swaraj. And when, after the War, we got the Rowlatt Acts and Amritsar instead, we non-co-operated. We couldn't fight you: we didn't even wish to fight you. But we were quite determined that the whole world should know how you had betrayed us."

"Those are very hard words," said Neil,

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"and very ungrateful words, in return for all that we've done for you! What about the Reforms?"

Safdar Ali answered hotly, "Reforms! Humbug! We of the younger generation, Muslims and Hindus alike, are quite fed up with them. They merely play with us. Your British Parliament has the last word in every single thing. You never treated South Africa like that, or Canada, or even the Irish Free State."

"They belong," Majid almost shouted, "to the white race, but we—we are a coloured race, and that makes all the difference!" (Neil, at this point, tried to demur.) "No! It's no use your denying it! That's the *real* difference! You're white and we are not! You're free and we are not! Oh! it's quite easy for us to talk like this in Oxford, but you good people here don't know what things are going on abroad. In Kenya, in South Africa, in India itself, we're up against the white race every time, and even your Parliament rubs it in—your Churchills and others—till we can bear it no longer!"

Safdar's short-lived excitement died down, but evidently there was a volcano underneath, which this subject of the "white race" had roused into violent action. Anil was equally excited, but he had kept to the argument more closely.

Neil had become excited on his side. He challenged the racial bias of the British Parliament. "You mustn't," he said, "confuse Par-

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liament with the Diehards like Churchill. After all they're a very small minority."

"What about this, then?" asked Anil. "Here is the Preamble which, we are told, is to be put at the head of the new Constitution: 'The time and manner of each advance can be determined *only by the British Parliament*, upon whom responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples.' Can't you realise what an insult that is?"

"No," said Neil bluntly.

"What!" cried Safdar. "Would you dare to tell the Irish Free State that each advance towards self-government must be determined *only* by the British Parliament? Would you dare to tell De Valera that *he* was not responsible for the welfare of his own people, because the British Parliament had taken on the job? You tried to do things like that with Ireland once, and also with South Africa, but you had to give it up, and you don't try now any longer. Let's say it quite plainly. The real reason that you make such a sharp distinction in our case is because we don't belong to your own white race! That's the real difference all over the world. If we were your kith and kin, sprung from your own blood, you'd give way quick enough, just as you've done in Canada, in South Africa, and now in Ireland. All that we ask you to do is exactly what you are doing here in this room: treat us as racial equals, not as racial inferiors."

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III

This brought us as far as the discussion could adequately reach on that evening, for it clearly had never even dawned on those undergraduates at Oxford that the white race prejudice meant incessant humiliation in the larger world outside Great Britain. Neil Munro, perhaps, had a suppressed instinct in his blood, from his forefathers, as to what it might mean: but to Alan and John and others the question of colour and race distinction hardly existed. They were as innocent of these things as little children are.

It seemed best, therefore, for me to set out in another paper what this issue implied, and after this had gone its round, we should decide what was our Christian attitude towards it all. For there was very strong feeling on the part of those who came from the East that the Christian Church had encouraged this imperialism in some of its worst forms.

CHAPTER VII

IMPERIALISM

I

THE paper which I wrote ran as follows :

“What I tried to set forward with regard to ‘Anglo-Indian’ character represents the extreme reaction in the past towards a foreign domination on the part of those who submit to it, and, by so doing, experience humiliation.

“I have explained how such an unnatural condition corrupts the finer instincts on both sides ; how it creates in the rulers a domineering temper, which is far removed from the Christian spirit, and implants in the ruled a subservience that destroys all decent moral standards. Race feeling, with bitterness on both sides, becomes intensified. For Lord Rosebery’s definition is correct.

“‘What is Imperialism,’ he says, ‘but the Predominance of Race?’

“Everything that is happening to-day in Europe proves this to be essentially true.

“This racial evil of imperialism is found in its acutest form not in India itself, but in those parts of the world to which Indians have gone as settlers. For nearly three million Indians are

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now living in different parts of the world outside India, and if those in Burma are added this number must be doubled. They are to be found scattered abroad in almost every land, and where the white race confronts them, it tends to react against them. It excludes them, if possible, as a menace and a public danger, fearing their virtues of thrift and industry even more than their vices.

"There are laws which prevent any further admission of Indians, even though they are British subjects. In certain cases, where they have already been admitted and have gained the right of domicile, they have been prevented from having a vote. They are also brought up against the social barrier of the colour bar, which confronts them at every turn. Vast areas of the British Dominions are in this way closed against Indians for residence, though these lands are empty while India is crowded. Therefore it is a hollow mockery to ask Indians to take pride in the 'Empire,' when they are excluded by the strictest anti-Asiatic regulations from residing in two-thirds of it.

II

"It is this unjust racial discrimination, inflicted on Indians outside India itself, that has most of all poisoned the springs of human-kindness and tainted the sources of good fellowship. Therefore it is no cause for wonder that extreme

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resentment has filled the hearts of those who have travelled and settled abroad. For the treatment meted out to them has often been disgraceful. Whether on board ship, or on the railway train, at hotels, restaurants and lodgings, at frontiers and places of embarkation, the Indian traveller is in danger, at a moment's notice, of having to submit to some insult, often in front of those who look on with open scorn and contempt.

"One of my Indian friends, whose special duties compelled him to travel, told me that while he had met with kindly people on his journeys, yet the slights from which he had been made to suffer had caused him to be perpetually on the alert. He could never tell from what quarter the same mischief would return. He assured me that he would not stay a day longer in the place where he lived abroad, if his livelihood and that of his family were not dependent on it.

"When I asked him in what countries he was most badly treated, he first of all put to me the question whether I wished to know the truth; and when I pressed him to tell me the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he replied that the Anglo-Saxon, in his opinion, was the worst offender. It was no protection to himself, but rather the reverse, to be a British subject. While he gave generous credit to the English people in their own homes, and praised their hospitality, he could not give the same character to the Anglo-Saxon race when they went abroad.

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"There, he told me with sadness, they seemed to lose all their kindly feeling and to bow too easily to the convention of the place where they were stationed. Only a few held out bravely against the current of their surroundings when the final test came.

III

"The height and depth of this human tragedy (for it is nothing less) lie in the historical fact that the Indian people have inherited a civilisation that makes them intellectually and spiritually among the leading peoples of mankind. Their Emperor Asoka, more than two centuries before the birth of Christ, had established a genuine love of peace and a profound aversion from the cruel bloodshed of war in the hearts of his own people all over the north of India. This created a repulsion against every form of violence, which has remained strong right up to the present time.

"The influence of the Buddhist Movement, which he championed, spread as far as Ceylon and Burma, and also to the island of Java and the farther East. Thus, the Indian people have still deep within them an old inherited instinct which makes them abhor brute force. They have also carried the same peaceable and reasonable temper with them into their daily lives. Such characteristics place them very high in the scale of human values as an ancient civilised

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people, who have maintained up to the present time the true inner life of the spirit.

"Since this can be proved historically, the claim made by the white race to-day, to be superior in every respect, bears no relation at all to the spiritual realities underlying human history. The mere possession by Europeans of deadly weapons of precision carries with it no *moral* standing as a ground whereon to base the racial supremacy that is now being claimed.

IV

"As Christians we have been very greatly distressed of late by a strange racialism springing up in a neighbouring country. Germany had become very dear to us on account of its evangelical devotion to Christ whom we worship. We are startled, therefore, by the sudden reversion to a racial cult, even among those who still profess and call themselves Christians. Our hearts go out to those who are fighting the good fight of faith against tremendous odds, in order to bring back the Christian religion from racial narrowness to its first principles of racial fellowship.

"Yet our own Anglo-Saxon intolerance should give us pause and be no less disturbing to us. For as soon as ever we leave England, with its higher Christian ideals, we seem at once to assume a domination over other races, and even to institute a 'white race' creed, with ceremonies

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and formulas which deny altogether the unity of mankind in Christ. We erect our 'white churches' wherein no coloured person is welcomed. We tell the non-white races to worship in churches of their own. Thus we have brought wilfully these racial distinctions within the fold of Christ.

V

"On one occasion, while I was staying in Durban, a young Indian with high qualifications as a teacher began to tell me what he had suffered since he had come out to South Africa to take up work there among his own people.

"'If only your skin,' he said to me, 'were the same colour as mine, you would soon understand in South Africa what it means to belong to a subject race. The most harassing thing of all is this, that here in Natal I can never tell from one moment to another when I am likely to be insulted; so, unconsciously, I begin to look out for some expression of ill-feeling towards me, and suspect the insult even when it is never intended. In this way, it becomes almost a second nature to me to be always on my guard.'

"'Tell me,' I asked, 'how this extreme sensitiveness first arose.'

"'One day,' he said, 'not long after I had come out to South Africa I had to go into a post office. So I just went up to the counter, when a European came up and assaulted me. That was my first lesson. I could not retaliate nor make

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a scene. To do so would only have made things worse. There were other Europeans standing there, but they didn't interfere or take my side. When such a thing as this has happened once, if you are very sensitive, you find yourself suspecting that it will happen again at any moment.

“There are, of course, good Europeans in South Africa who are ashamed at such incidents, but there are others who are on the watch in order to keep, as they call it, “the coloured man in his place.”

“In earlier days, when I was at home in India, I was glad that my country was linked with Britain, where freedom was so highly honoured. It is true I had received now and then haughty treatment from Englishmen whom I had met. But I had been brought up in a Mission College and my teachers there treated me as a friend. It is true, also, that my own people had told me what to expect when I went out as a teacher to South Africa. But somehow I didn't understand the full meaning of what they said, till I came out and saw it for myself. On the way, I stayed for a short time in Kenya, and there things are just as bad as in Natal. The very look in the white man's face is one of domineering superiority. He lets you know all the while that Kenya is “a white man's country,” and that the Indian is an intruder.

““I must confess,” he went on to tell me, “I never understood before how guilty we were

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in India for treating our own depressed classes as "untouchables." I don't think I ever seriously offended in that respect, except for the fact that I didn't openly protest against it—taking it all for granted. Here in Natal, however, we ourselves have become "untouchables"! We cannot travel in the same railway compartments with Europeans, and we are plainly told that we must not mix with them. Sometimes when we invite Europeans to our social functions a few come, but they usually sit apart, as if they were doing us a favour, and there is nothing that hurts us more than being "patronised." They hardly ever invite us back in return. We are "pariahs" out here, and we feel it most acutely. I would not stay a day longer in Natal, if I had not signed a contract.'

VI

"An incident from my own experience in South Africa may illustrate what he said; for my thoughts went back, as he spoke, to what once happened in the railway station at Johannesburg. I was travelling alone, and had already reserved a seat on the train. Ramdas, Mahatma Gandhi's son, had come to see me off, and was taking my small bag into the compartment, when a European schoolboy, on his way back to school after the holidays, lifted up his hand to strike Ramdas for entering that part of the train. Only just in time I caught hold of the

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boy and prevented the blow from being struck. The lad looked back on me with surprise. He could hardly imagine being prevented by a white man from thus dealing with a 'coloured' person.

"But this was by no means the worst thing which I had to encounter on first coming out to South Africa, for I found that even the Churches were tainted through and through with the same colour prejudice, so that there were 'white' and 'black' churches. Indian Christians were not allowed to sit with European Christians in many of these so-called Christian churches.

"Thank God, things have altered for the better since those evil days. The Student Christian and Oxford Group Movements in South Africa have already accomplished wonderful things. But even among earnest Christians, who sincerely profess the name of Christ, many further changes have yet to be made before the House of God is wholly cleansed from impurities and scandals of this kind.

VII

"It would be quite easy for me to fill a book with narratives concerning disgraceful happenings like these which I have witnessed on a hundred journeys in all parts of the world; and I have suffered many untoward incidents for protesting against such treatment. In this way I have learnt by bitter experience to understand

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the sufferings which Indians themselves have been called upon to endure. While, every now and then, we can register some improvement, and can be deeply thankful to see a change for the better, yet on other sides things appear to be going back instead of forward.

"In London, for instance, the metropolis of the British Commonwealth, where in earlier times there was no serious infection, the epidemic of white race prejudice has begun to spread in wider and wider circles. Both Indians and Africans have been treated in an insulting manner, and instances of such conduct appear to be multiplying. The Christian conscience has been unable hitherto to overtake this growing evil, and Christian public opinion has seemed almost indifferent, even when outrageous things have happened.

"It may be argued that such treatment would still go on, and insults would have to be endured—the world being what it is—even if India were free. But this is not borne out by the facts. The Japanese, who are a free people, very rarely suffer such treatment as Indians have to endure, and the reason is obvious. Once, in Durban, an insult was offered to some Japanese sailors who had gone on shore, but immediately a public apology was made. The incident has never happened again. Yet with Indians, although they are British subjects no such apology would be thought of. Indeed, in their case, the very words 'subject' and 'subjection'

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appear to run together. Every Indian believes that if his country were free he would be an enfranchised citizen of the world, and receive and give respect in an entirely different manner. Those who have never been held in subjection cannot even imagine how the iron enters into the soul and corrupts the inner life.

"The European who brutally assaults a member of another race, when he cannot retaliate, is a coward and a bully. He takes advantage of the fact that the other person is unable to hit back. As the world goes at present, the forceful retention in subjection of another race which is gentle and refined, and at the same time helpless, sets a premium on bullying in the race that rules. The evil of such subjection does not stop with those who are thus ruled over. As I have already shown the evil that is even more deadly is the deterioration which takes place in the character of the foreigner who rules.

"Every one has noticed the change which takes place in this respect in the character of an Englishman who goes out East. At first he behaves himself like a gentleman. After that, this race imperialism seems to get into his very blood, and so subtle is the poison that he is hardly aware of the demoralisation that has taken place.

"The main thesis, therefore, that Indians would put forward is this, that only when India herself is a free nation will they be able to possess the full inner sense of personal freedom. For

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then they will be able to meet the British everywhere on equal terms and receive equal treatment from them. All the present 'patronising' on the one hand, and 'bullying' on the other, will cease. Then and then only a healthy friendship between members of the two countries will be made possible.

"Once I was giving a lesson on some of the simpler English poems in a junior class at St Stephen's College, Delhi. We were learning by heart 'The Village Blacksmith.' After the English class was over, one of my students, who was best of all at games and athletics, said to me, 'Sir, there is one line in that poem which I keep repeating to myself ever since you taught it to us.'

" 'What is it ? ' I asked.

" 'It is that line, sir,' he said to me, 'where it says about the blacksmith,

He looks the whole world in the face.

We shall never be able to do that until India is free.'

VIII

"The phrase 'Helots of the Empire' has been ascribed by Indians themselves to their own position within the British dominions. When a faint protest is made against such a title, the Indian answer is that it is far better to face the stark realities of life than to be fooled with specious phrases. For the word 'Helot' repre-

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sents the glaring fact that Indians have not been welcomed as yet as racial equals, but only as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water.'

"Mahatma Gandhi has often pointed out, in his campaign to remove 'Untouchability,' that Hindus belonging to the higher castes have deserved to suffer in South Africa from the same indignities which they themselves have heaped upon others in their own country. He is quite unsparing in his condemnation of racial segregation whenever he meets with it among his own people, and his efforts have already been rewarded by encouraging results. The whole system of 'Untouchability' in India appears to be tottering to its fall. His stern and salutary teaching concerning the treatment of Indians as 'untouchables' in South Africa has been taken to heart.

"But while this act of noble reparation towards their own fellow-countrymen is being made by Indians themselves, it is surely a sorrow, too deep for words, that the Christian Church should be unable to rise to the height of a great occasion. For it is nothing less than a moral defeat that those who profess to follow the teaching of Christ should be busily occupied in building up a 'white race' religion within the bounds of Christendom itself.

"For those in Great Britain and the Dominions who have imagination and insight, it must surely be plain that things like this cannot go on indefinitely without an explosion far

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greater than anything that has been witnessed in the past. For India is slowly and painfully realising what these things mean, and her marvellous patience will in the end become exhausted. When she has got rid, from within, of her own evil of 'Untouchability,' she will feel all the more intensely the wrongs that are done to her by others."

IX

When I had finished the paper Alan said with much feeling, "I never thought for a moment that things were as bad as that."

"Nor I," said Neil Munro.

"What I should like to do," said I, "would be to examine the Christian principles which are entirely opposed to this imperialism, and also to consider whether they are put into practice."

This was agreed by every one present.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE

I

"PLEASE don't think for a moment," said Mohanlal, "that our real quarrel is with Christ and His teaching. We revere Him with all our hearts. There's not an Indian to-day who would speak a word against Him. But we don't find His teaching carried out in practice."

Mulchand agreed and so did Safdar Ali. Christ, he declared, was a Prophet. The Quran called Him the "Word of God." But though He was born in Asia, many Christians in their hearts despised the East. They would have rejected Christ if He had been born in the East to-day and had come in lowly guise to Europe from Asia.

"The Germans who follow Hitler," said Anil, "and believe in race supremacy and the policy of force are honest in their professions. They despise the Jews who come from the East, and so they have gone back to racialism pure and simple. Ludendorff was only telling the truth when he said he was not a Christian! But the British who go abroad, full of racial prejudice and altogether believing in violence,

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insist on calling themselves Christians; and yet they never carry out Christ's teaching."

"That may be," said Alan sadly, "but, in India, can you tell me why there is often a bitterness even against the missionaries, who are such self-sacrificing men and women? I am hoping to go out to the East as a medical missionary, and you know how Christ is all in all to me. I want you frankly to explain to me, Anil, what the missionaries have done to give offence."

"We've nothing whatever against *you*, Alan," said Anil, "and medical missionaries, who quietly carry on their Christ-like work, are loved by us for their pure goodness. But there are others, who come out and soon become members of the dominant race; they domineer and interfere and always want to put us right. They think of us as heathen and even speak evil of our religion. Christ would never have done that! Then they go back home and paint everything in the darkest colours. They are thus doing harm to our cause as a people struggling to be free, and are in league with the imperialists who want to keep us in subjection."

"Only think for a minute," said Mohanlal, "what happens when sermons presenting the darker side of Indian life are delivered year after year in England. It's like the dropping of water on a stone. It wears the stone away. These missionaries are, as you say, self-sacrificing people; they are, therefore, trusted far more than Miss Mayo was. For every one took her

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as a sensation, and most of us just read over what she had to say and then forgot all about it. People knew she hadn't spent her whole life in India. But these missionaries have done so. That's where the trouble comes. Their word carries more weight."

"You wouldn't have them," asked Neil, "hide things from us, would you? We're not babies!"

"Not at all," said Mohanlal, "but we *do* claim that what is good should be appreciated. *You* wouldn't like all the foul things that are happening to-day in the slums of London to be placarded in India, while nothing is said about the beauties of English home life and the purity of English home ideals."

"I see the point," said Neil. "To tell you the truth I couldn't stand Miss Mayo, so I'm altogether with you there."

"Can't you do anything to stop this one-sided propaganda?" asked Anil. "Somewhere I read a passage of Tagore about the missionaries, which seemed to put the whole of our case in a single sentence. 'We honour,' he wrote, 'the beauty of the character of Christ, and we admire His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, but we feel indignant when His followers go back to the West and openly misrepresent us. That is not Christ-like.' What Tagore says there is true. It's not Christ-like. Don't you see what harm is being done to your own Christian religion? You come to our shores as our guests, and we freely offer you our hospitality. At least, you should show

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us the same courtesy in return by putting our case forward impartially when you go home. But when you draw a lurid picture of everything evil and call that 'India,' those who listen naturally begin to question whether it is wise and safe to grant full self-governing powers to us, if things are as bad as they have been painted."

II

"Do let me say something on that point," I pleaded. "Most missionaries, I believe, would frankly acknowledge the wrong that was done by such one-sided propaganda in the past. They started, unfortunately, with a conventional mode of speech, due to bad theology, and this has terribly handicapped them ever since. I read the other day some words of the first Lord Minto, written at the very beginning of last century, and I copied them down. Here they are: 'Pray read,' he said, 'this miserable stuff addressed to the Gentoos (pagans), in which the pages are filled with hell-fire, and hell-fire, and still hotter fire, denounced against a whole race of men for believing in the religion which they were taught by their fathers and mothers. Is *this* the doctrine of our Christian Faith?'

"That was written," I continued, "more than a century ago, and this 'miserable stuff,' as he rightly calls it, was repeated for a long while afterwards. I had the painful task of wading through many volumes of old missionary litera-

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ture, and found the same dark picture being drawn all along. There was no attempt at any Christian appreciation of the village life of India, that was blossoming all around with singular beauty. Christ said, 'Consider the lilies how they grow,' and in village homes of India there was always to be witnessed a gentleness of human goodness unspoilt by that luxury of wealth which He sternly condemned. Just as in Galilee, so all around them there were innocent children in Indian homes, whom Christ would have taken in His arms and blessed. There were also the flowers of the field and the birds of the air, from which He would have drawn His lessons of simple trust in God. But they seem to have ignored all this when drawing their dark picture."

"We in India," said Safdar Ali, "love that part of Christ's teaching about the lilies of the field."

"Yes," I said, "you understand it. I remember on one occasion, when I had been picking some blossoms from a flowering tree, a simple village woman rebuked me saying, 'When the blossom falls to the ground, God gives it to you to take home and use for worship. Why do you tear it from the tree? The flower has as much right to live its own life as you.' That rebuke went home to my heart, and I have grown more tender towards God's flowers ever since. This village life of India, so similar to that in the midst of which Christ was born, was before their eyes in those earlier days when the mis-

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sionaries first came to India ; but many of them seem to have been blinded by a narrow creed, which they called the religion of Jesus. What a mockery ! Fancy St Francis of Assisi, who came nearest of all to Christ, talking as they did ! It would be unthinkable ! ”

“ Surely,” said Neil, “ the missionaries weren’t all of that character. Dr Duff for instance, who was the friend of Raja Ram Mohan Roy ; Dr Pennell of the Frontier ; Dr Miller of Madras, and a hundred others.”

“ Ah ! ” exclaimed Mohanlal, “ Dr Miller was a *rishi* (saint). His pupils are to be found all over India. *He* never went home to Scotland and slandered us behind our backs.”

“ No indeed,” I said, “ and I think you’ll find that, as the nineteenth century advanced, a much more generous type of missionary came out to India who tried to recognise the beauty in all they saw around them, without minimising the evil. Some of the finest appreciation of Hindu religious poetry has come recently from the missionaries themselves, and I have read noble tributes to Islam also. Times have changed.”

“ But there’s one thing,” said Safdar Ali, “ that still goes on and we can’t stand it. We’ve read about Christ, how, like our own Prophet, during the days when persecution was abroad, He had not even a place whereon to lay His head. He was humble and simple. But some of those who seek to represent Him in our country live in large bungalows with lots of servants, who are

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rude to us and make us sit in the verandah till the 'Sahib' invites us to come into his office; and when we go into his presence, he treats us as inferiors. Christ never lived like that or treated people who came to Him in that way!"

"Safdar," I protested, "that's an old story. Surely, it hardly ever happens to-day, does it? I thought such treatment had vanished long ago."

Safdar was by no means as certain as I was. "You don't know," he said to me, "how many of us have been hurt by such treatment, when we never expected it."

III

"Shall I speak very frankly indeed?" asked Anil.

"Do, by all means," said I; "the franker the better."

"The World War," said Anil, "destroyed all our respect for the Christian West. When Christian brothers killed one another and Christian sisters sang hymns of hate, we said to ourselves that the West hadn't even begun to understand what Christ taught. We had in Calcutta a young Bengali poet, Satyendra Nath Datta, who died soon after the War. One of his last poems was called 'Christmas Day.' He wrote in it:

Come, Lord Christ, come to this Asia of ours,

There is no place for you in Europe.

Bring your message to us in Asia:

Our heavy-laden hearts will find comfort in you.

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He was not a Christian, according to your way of thinking, but he was a much better Christian than those in Europe who were shedding one another's blood. Do please forgive me, if I've gone too far; but you asked me to be frank, and I've taken you at your word."

"Anil," said John Murray, "we respect you all the more when you hit us hard like that! We much prefer that to the way some of you—not you, personally—say nice things about us, just to flatter us."

IV

"I can't tell you how glad I am," said Alan, "that we've had this talk together, and I owe a debt to you, Anil!"

"Yes, I agree with you," said I, "but what we want now to consider is the attitude of Christ Himself towards these racial problems. As I interpret the story of the Gospel, He came into our midst to break down these racial barriers and do away with these hard and fast distinctions between man and man."

"And between man and woman also," said Alan. "He took woman, from the very first, as man's equal."

"Yes, indeed," said I, "and what a place in His heart He gave to little children! He loved the beauties of Nature and called us God's sons and daughters. All this was utterly contrary to the sour religion of the Pharisees, whom He

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condemned. It came from His absolute sense of union with the Father. 'I and my Father are one,' He said; and again, 'One is your Father, and all ye are brethren.' There cannot be any doubt as to what His standard was. He was universal. Look at this great word, 'He that doeth the will of God, the same is my mother and my sister and my brother.'"

"Why, that surely is the essence of Islam!" said Safdar. "Did Christ say that?"

"The amazing thing is to see how simple these utterances are. They can so easily be understood and yet they are so profound. They are like the deep, fundamental laws of the Universe. The noblest example of His teaching," I went on, "is that of the early Christians themselves, who suffered martyrdom for what they believed and practised. The Apostle Paul spent a whole lifetime in breaking down the worst barrier of all in the ancient world between Jew and Gentile. Even Peter, at first, could not get over that barrier and sit down sensibly to eat and drink with those of another race."

"We're still in that backward state in India," said Anil, "with 'Hindu pāni' (water) and 'Musalmān pāni,' being called out at every railway station."

"That cry makes my blood boil!" said Abdul Majid.

"And mine also," echoed Mulchand.

"Yes," I added, "and I have to confess that in South Africa and other places, Christians are

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just as bad. In Capetown, for instance, or Durban, you will find teashops, with notices written up, 'For Europeans only,' and I well remember the row we had when I took an Indian friend into one of them by mistake !”

“Why, even in London,” said Safdar, “that kind of thing is beginning. The Americans from the southern United States, and Europeans from South Africa, have started it. We go to a lodging house, where there’s a notice, ‘Apartments to Let’; but when the landlady sees that we’re Indian she says that she’s so sorry her last room has been taken, and we know all the while it’s untrue.”

V

“I would like to tell you,” said Mulchand, “an incident in my own life, which made all the difference to me.”

“Do, please,” said Alan eagerly. “It would help the discussion and bring it to the point.”

“I know you’ll pardon me,” said Mulchand, somewhat timidly, “if I speak out from my heart, as Anil did. First of all, I would like to tell you how deeply we feel pained when the missionary calls our sacred religion ‘heathen.’ We have dropped the insulting word ‘mlechcha’ on our side; but we still hear this word ‘heathen’ from yours. We recognise at once any man of religion when he is lowly, as Christ was lowly; and considerate to others, as He was. But we

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don't recognise as true followers of Christ, those who come out as strangers to our shores and despise us and expect every one to bow down to them. We used to have respect for Englishmen once, but we have very little left after what we have seen and heard."

"What made the difference?" asked Neil Munro.

"First of all, as Anil has told you, the World War; then Amritsar and the 'crawling order,' and then the brutal *lathi* charges which were ordered by European officers in Bombay. These have destroyed the old respect. They made us quite certain that the West believes in violence. That's what Young India thinks to-day."

"But let's have this incident in your own life," said Alan. "Tell us that."

"I was obliged to begin in a round-about way," said Mulchand, with more confidence, "just to show you what made me reject your so-called Christianity, which has come to us from the West. I had been deeply drawn in my heart by the portrait of Christ in the Gospels; and I once saw a picture of His face which also drew my heart strangely towards Him, as the Man of Sorrows, forsaken on the Cross, and yet pleading with His dying lips, 'Father, forgive them.' That prayer so moved me that I kept on repeating it to myself—'Father, forgive them.' Christ's face of love and sorrow, as He said those words, quite haunted me."

"What then?" asked Alan.

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"It was just at a time like this that I came more closely into touch with Englishmen than I had ever done before. At first I was very greatly attracted by them, especially by one who often spoke to me about Christ. He was very friendly and kind. Up to that time I had kept to my own Indian dress, because I loved everything that belonged to my own country. I mention this, because it led to the incident I am now going to relate. One night I was travelling by train all alone in Indian dress, when an Englishman came to the door of my compartment and ordered me out. He wanted the carriage to himself. He said, with great rudeness, that he objected to travelling with a 'native.' The stationmaster asked me to give way in order to avoid a disturbance, and I weakly consented to do so. But the insult, right in front of the people who had collected round me, had gone very deep, and my mind was on fire. That fire raged within me all through the night, and I tried to pray, 'Father, forgive him,' but it was too hard for me."

"You should *never* have given way to him like that!" said Abdul Majid, hotly.

"Yes, that rankled most of all: but—do you know?—my heart is still bitter, whenever I think of what happened, and I can't get over it even yet, though it occurred many years ago."

"Mulchand," said Alan, with pain in his eyes as he spoke, "I'd do *anything* to make up for that insult, if I only knew how to do it! But

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aren't you too hard on us Christians, to judge us by that single incident?"

"You're right," said Mulchand, "I know I oughtn't to dwell on it; but these things can't be settled by any logic, or rational way of thinking. The wound somehow remains open, and even your own friendship and the freedom here at Oxford haven't been able to cure it."

Every one had listened in silence, with the exception of Abdul's sharp interruption. Mulchand then went one step further. "May I add just one word?" he asked, making a great effort. "This is how I look at it. So long as you continue with your Colour Bar and your 'white' churches, where only white men may enter, it seems clear to me that the Christian religion can never heal this running sore of the world. For *we* shall never be able to look you in the face till we have thrown aside our 'Colour Bar'; and *you* will never be able to look us in the face till you've done the same!"

VI

"Don't you think, after all, that things are really getting better?" Neil Munro asked, with an anxious look. He was fervently patriotic in religious matters as well as in political affairs, and could hardly bear to listen while Mulchand was speaking.

Some of those present were quite certain that the younger generation was throwing religion

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aside altogether and including with it the excessive nationalism of the past—just like garments which had become outworn. Others said that the general feeling was becoming more bitter and that the racial spirit was rising.

"Look at the continent of Europe," said John Murray. "Surely racialism is worse than ever, and we shall soon have to fight once more against it as they did in the early days of Christian martyrdom. The world's gone back since the War, not forward—at least, as far as Europe is concerned."

"Asia's just as bad," said Mohanlal. Safdar agreed, but declared that Islam was attacking these things all along the line, while other religions were only standing still. This appeared to be leading to controversy, when Anil interrupted.

"Oh, what an awful mess we're in," he said in disgust. "When shall we get rid of it all and live like decent, rational human beings? Sometimes I'm almost ready to throw over religion altogether, and call it the dope of the common people."

"What on earth would be the good of that?" said Neil. "That would only make matters worse and drive us back into despair. None of us here could ever go that way. No, what's needed is to purify religion—not to cast away the greatest gift which God has given us."

Anil still looked doubtful. The iron had entered deep. He detested the irrational element in man.

VII

"May I tell you one thing," said Mohanlal. "If only this hateful racial stumbling-block, in all its different forms—religious as well as political—were removed, and we were ready to treat one another as simple human beings requiring sympathy, it would revolutionise the whole world."

At this point the discussion closed. "There's still something about India on the same subject," I urged, "that I haven't yet written down. It will explain the disabilities under which Indians suffer in different parts of the world, owing to this evil. I don't like to let go this central moral issue until the whole case has been made so abundantly clear that it can never be forgotten. So, if it's no burden to you, I'll put this also in writing and get it sent round before our next gathering. Then, when we meet, we shall be able to take up the economic aspect, which in some respects brings to the surface new moral issues still more fundamental."

The following chapter contains the short paper which I wrote, setting out in detail certain facts about the Colour Bar.

CHAPTER IX

THE COLOUR BAR

I

My third paper read as follows :
“The incessant indignities from which Indians suffer abroad, owing to the Colour Bar, have become familiar as household words in the homes of Indians themselves. Things that are happening in Africa reach Bombay through those who travel to and fro across the Indian Ocean. The Press is full of them. Public meetings are held about them. Thus what Indians suffer in those countries goes directly to reinforce the bitter sense of subjection which is felt in India itself. While the situation which I have described in this paper has shown some signs of improvement in recent years, the Colour Bar still remains.

“‘Only when India is free,’ the well-known saying runs, ‘will Indians in other lands be respected as citizens of a free nation.’

“The racial insults which have been inflicted upon Indians abroad are one of the most potent causes of political unrest. People in Great Britain do not in the least understand what it means for Indians to be treated as unwanted and

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unwelcome in almost every part of the King's dominions.

"When, in November 1913, a flagrant act of injustice in Natal led on to the shooting of Indians on a sugar estate, the resentment aroused in India brought about a grave crisis. Mr Gokhale, who was careful in his use of words, declared that no outburst of public feeling had ever reached such an explosive pitch since the Mutiny.

"When, again, ten years later, in 1923, the British settlers in East Africa threatened to take up their rifles and 'drive the Indians into the sea,' the excitement all over India became so intense that only the immediate summons of the different parties to London prevented an irreparable disaster.

II

"The history of the first emigration of Indians abroad in large numbers, which happened just a hundred years ago, is full of tragedy. The humiliation of it can never be forgotten by those who love the good name of their country.

"For when slavery was finally abolished, in 1833, a crisis followed in the colonies where slave labour had hitherto been employed. The emancipated slaves refused to go back to work on the sugar plantations, because this labour carried with it still the old stigma of slavery. Therefore, in order to save the sugar industry from extinction, the Governor-General was induced to allow in-

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indentured labour to be recruited in Indian villages for the colonial sugar plantations. Mauritius was the first colony to receive this Indian labour, in 1835. After this the system spread to other colonies also. Thousands of Indian villagers were sent out year after year. They were despatched in what were called 'coolie' ships to all parts of the world.

"The immoral conditions under which they lived in their barracks, called 'coolie lines,' were appalling. This was due to the extreme disproportion of women and the lack of married couples. Sexual jealousies arose. Suicides and murders were frequent. All the brutalities of the old slave days reproduced themselves wherever the employer himself was a hard taskmaster; for he had almost unlimited power. Adequate government inspection became practically impossible. Labourers who suffered from bad treatment were terrorised into silence.

"There were good masters as well as bad. Under the former the labourers' lot was often a happy one. Many also settled down in the colony after the indenture was over. But the accumulation of misery and moral evil was immense.

"That such a system—inevitably carrying with it the old stigma of slavery—should have been imposed upon India by Great Britain, so soon after the slave traffic was abolished, and should have gone on for over eighty years, shows very plainly indeed in what low esteem Indians were

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held. Sir William Hunter, the historian, has called the system 'semi-servile'; and that is what it really was, in its degrading features.

"The struggle to obtain its abolition was a very painful and arduous one. Indians of all classes took an honourable part in it. Above all, the leading women of India, ladies of high rank from every province, indignant at the treatment meted out to their own sisters, actively supported abolition. They went to the Viceroy in person and held meetings all over the country.

"It is also good to note that the women of Australia, who had been shocked at the evil conditions of Indian labour in Fiji, helped nobly in the final stages of the struggle. The Abolition, which came on 1st January 1920, is a red-letter day in Indian history. Thank God, the whole evil thing, which was an offence against humanity, has now been banished from the earth for ever, just as slavery had been banished in 1833.

"But its after-effects cannot be so quickly remedied. For just at a time when it was pre-eminently necessary to raise high the reputation of India among the nations the spectacle of Indian 'coolie' labour, working in the old slave-cultivated colonial plantations, dragged it down.

III

"When Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who had been called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, London, went out to South Africa, he was

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commonly spoken of as a 'coolie' barrister. There could hardly have been a more ignorant use of this word 'coolie' from an Indian point of view; yet Indians in South Africa, however educated, were wont to be called by this name of 'coolie,' or else 'Sammy' (a corruption of Swami), which was equally a word of contempt. All were bundled together as 'coloured people,' and any nickname was good enough for them.

"The treatment which Mr Gandhi received from the day he landed in South Africa was often so outrageous that it will hardly bear repeating. Once he was nearly lynched by an excited Durban mob, when their passions were roused by colour prejudice of the worst kind. On one occasion his life was saved by an English lady's heroism. Her name was Mrs Alexander. In his Autobiography Mr Gandhi has paid a grateful tribute to her bravery. Simply on account of his race and colour he was despised and rejected. He was even excluded from a Christian church where I was preaching. Had I known it, I should have refused to preach that sermon. The really amazing thing is this, that, in spite of all he has suffered, he has kept in his heart a very deep affection for the South African Europeans and has remained quite free from any bitterness of spirit.

"In the Transvaal, the racial prejudice against Indians is probably strongest of all. A considerable proportion of domiciled Indians are obliged to live in separate 'locations' apart from the

Europeans. The insanitary condition of these places is deplorable.

"Last year, to mention a slight incident which explains the situation, I did my utmost to obtain sanction from a municipal council in the Transvaal for the purchase of a site for an Indian school. This site was to be paid for by a generous Indian merchant. It would cost the municipality nothing, and would provide for the education of the youngest Indian children. But the elections were near at hand, and the Mayor, who was a candidate for that special ward, was not ready to advise the municipality to accept this gift.

"When I went to him about it he said that the Europeans in the neighbourhood might object to an Indian school being built near their own houses. Though I pointed out the great harm that would be done to the children if they remained uneducated, he was still unmoved. The few Europeans in the neighbourhood who had the vote might object; and he could not risk his seat. Such colossal selfishness is due to race prejudice alone; for what harm could these tiny Indian children do to the Europeans if they had a school of their own?

"In addition to these numerous disabilities a Colour Bar Act has been passed prohibiting African workmen from undertaking certain forms of skilled mechanical labour. No one yet knows how far the provisions of this Act will be extended, under the pressure of the European

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Trades' Unions, which have the voting power. Already this Colour Bar Act has been applied to certain skilled work in the mines, and it has tended indirectly to affect Indian interests also. Thousands of Indians have been thrown out of employment in order to make room for what is called 'white labour.' Administrative acts of this kind, penalising on racial grounds African and Indian labour, are sinister and strange. It had been the proud boast of the British Constitution hitherto that it was free from racialism, and stood for equal justice for all races. But the whole conception of a 'Commonwealth' has been undermined by what has happened in South Africa. For it seems that a 'White Race Empire,' in which Indians are to remain in subordination under the white race, has now been substituted for it.

IV

"For many years past British Columbia has shut her own doors fast against any new Indian immigration. This exclusion of Indians was enforced at a time when only a few thousand emigrants from the north of India had made the very difficult journey by sea from Calcutta via China and Japan, to Vancouver.

"The fact that one of the finest races in the world, the Sikhs of the Punjab, had been prohibited by Canadian law from entering British Columbia has left behind a deep resentment.

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The bravery and chivalry of the Sikhs is well known, and I can assert from personal knowledge that their nobility of character is equal to their bravery. Whenever I have met them abroad they have received me as their guest and admitted me to their temples. A more affectionate and generous people it would be impossible to find. Yet they were prevented for many years from bringing over their wives and children to British Columbia, even in the case of those who had obtained their domicile before the exclusion laws were passed. Only with great difficulty was this small concession obtained. Even now they are still regarded as aliens without a vote, and the Exclusion Law remains in force.

V

“The harsh treatment of Indians in Kenya has had its repercussions all over India and has led to grave political results. The whole history of British East Africa, from the time it was first annexed, on the pretext of helping Indians who were British subjects, has been one long record of hopes held out to India and then withdrawn.

“‘Since South Africa,’ Major Grogan declared, ‘has closed the back door into Africa, so that no Indian may enter Durban, in the same manner the British in East Africa must close the front door at Mombasa.’

“If the British settlers had been successful in this racial policy, and Kenya had finally been

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closed against Indians, this would have meant that not only were all the larger Dominions shut out from Indian immigration, but even in tropical Africa, opposite their own shores, Indians would have had no place. Their leaders would naturally ask, 'Are you going to exclude us from the tropics as well as from the temperate zone? Of what use is your "Empire" to us, where you close every door against us and hold us in subjection?'

"At the end of the European War, in which India had provided more than a million combatants, a mischievous *Economic Commission Report* was published in Kenya, signed by Major Grogan and Lord Delamere among others, strongly advocating the full 'exclusion' policy. So libellous were its terms concerning Indian moral character that it had to be disowned by the Colonial Office. The next few years were spent in a very bitter struggle, with the wildest threats on the part of the European settlers of an armed revolt if any major concession was made to Indian interests by the Colonial Office. In the end the Highlands of Kenya were reserved exclusively for Europeans, and a new Colour Bar was thus established.

"Ever since that highly critical period, from 1919 to 1923, the racial demands of the British settlers have continued, and opportunities have been eagerly seized by them for extending their powers. Thus, Indians have found to their cost that so long as the India Office remains a subordinate department at Whitehall there can be

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little hope of any satisfaction. They may register one protest after another, but no sanction lies behind them. For India is a 'Dependency,' and therefore has no independence.

VI

"Mahatma Gandhi relates how at one time he 'fell in love' with the British Constitution. It held his affection, he told us, because at that time it had no place for racial or religious distinctions. Mr Sastri also was devoted to it for similar reasons; and this accounts for the pain which was in his heart when he found the Colour Bar receiving authorisation from the British Parliament in respect to the Kenya Highlands. In this connection he uttered his famous sentence, which has since become proverbial: 'If Kenya is lost, all is lost.' For should it once be proved that the exclusive racial principle has been finally established within the framework of the British Constitution, divided loyalties of the most disastrous kind are certain to occur."

CHAPTER X

INDIAN POVERTY

I

BOTH John Murray and Neil Munro were anxious to get away from the race and colour question as quickly as possible. It worried them every time it was brought forward, and had evidently got on their nerves. It seemed also to disturb, somewhere within them, a guilty conscience with regard to British imperial affairs. For it was not easy for them to use the familiar word "Commonwealth" instead of "Empire" where the Colour Bar was so pronounced.

"We agree," said Neil, with a quick gesture of his hand, "that this colour prejudice exists; but you only make matters worse by continually harping on it."

Alan at once demurred. "I'm afraid," he said, "that's rather like the ostrich putting his head in the sand. Surely, Neil, it's much better to face the music and own up where we're wrong. We'll never get these things right unless we face up to them fairly and squarely."

"It's easy enough for you," said Anil to Neil, somewhat bitterly, "to keep the skeleton locked up in the cupboard, for *you* enjoy the privileges of

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the white race! But we're just the opposite. We get all the kicks, while you get all the halfpence."

"At any rate," said Neil, laughing, "we've had the old skeleton out of the cupboard all the while in *this* discussion. Why, we never seem to get away from it." Then he turned to Mohanlal. "Good lord, Mohanlal," he said, "I never knew that Indians had to put up with all those things before! Empire Day can't be exactly popular with you over there, when you've been shut out from all the Dominions, except on a temporary permit."

"Oh, do let's change the subject," said John Murray, "unless Hara's got something to say about it."

"Japan," said Hara quietly, "will never be satisfied until racial equality is fully recognised as the first article in the Covenant of the League of Nations."

"Well, Hara," said Alan, "I can assure you, as far as the Union Club is concerned, we're all agreed there; for that's the basis of our existence. But I must confess to you, all the same, that the chief reason why this clause was not embodied in the Covenant was because all the British Dominions objected to it, and the United States also—in spite of the Declaration of Independence. How could Australia agree to it, with its own White Australia policy? And how could the United States, with its Asiatic Exclusion Act? Kenya also flatly denied it."

"What about Japan herself?" asked Neil.

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"What about racial equality in your own Empire, Hara? Do you mean to say that you're advocating racial equality in North China, Korea and Manchuria?"

"Yes," said Hara, "our policy has been greatly misunderstood; just as your policy has in India."

II

It seemed best, in order to avoid a heated argument over this issue, to return at once to the question of India's poverty, which was the subject we had chosen for discussion; and this brought us face to face with the character and programme of Mahatma Gandhi. For while Abdul Majid and Mulchand represented the Congress Socialist party, the majority of those present wished most of all to understand the economic work which Mahatma Gandhi had carried forward with such remarkable success throughout the length and breadth of India.

"What is Gandhi like?" asked Neil. "Can't you give us, first of all, some idea about his character?"

"Very gladly," I replied, "because the man and his work are one. He is entirely absorbed in it, and that gives him his amazing driving power. The British working men and women in Lancashire and in the East End of London soon found that out. He was like one of themselves. I was with him during his visit, and they took to him at once."

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"Didn't they try to mob him in Lancashire?" asked Neil. "We heard he was under police protection."

"Exactly the opposite," I answered. "The police were quite unnecessary. The Lancashire working men and women cheered him wherever he went."

"You don't know how difficult it is," said Alan, "to get correct news about him. The newspapers always make him out to be an eccentric, and repeat from time to time that his influence is on the wane."

"The wish there is father to the thought," I replied, "and it's quite untrue. He remains, just as much as ever, the one man in India whom the masses in the villages revere and obey."

"Surely," said John Murray, "his economic programme, of substituting hand-spinning in the villages for mill-yarn, is quite absurd. There he seems to us to be an idealist, like Ruskin, looking back to a Golden Age which can never be repeated."

"On the contrary," I replied, "in very many things I've found him to be a pioneer blazing a trail into the future. It's true he's intensely conservative and looks back to the past for his inspiration. But he's also ultra-modern, and adores science when it can show him how to raise the level of the life of the poor."

"But he'd do away with all machinery, wouldn't he?" asked Alan. "At least that's what we're told."

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"There again you've been told wrong," I answered. "He'd welcome electricity in every village, if it could raise the power of village production and keep the villager in pure country air, eating wholesome country food. Have you ever thought of the absurdity of our own 'machine' existence in Europe, wherein more than twenty million workers, who have been sucked into the towns, are unemployed, and the country villages are becoming deserted? Gandhi is dealing with that whole problem of unemployment. He regards it as unnatural, and tries to go to the root of things, dealing with moral causes which lead to bad economic conditions. You mentioned Ruskin a moment ago. Gandhi owes one of the greatest of his inspirations to the little book *Unto This Last*. He took Ruskin for a long time as a master on these moral concerns of the economic life, just as he took Tolstoi for a master in the concerns of non-violence, which he calls *Ahimsa*."

III

"Didn't he go, once upon a time, to the Sermon on the Mount for his ideal?"

"Yes," I replied, "both to that and also to the Gita, which is his favourite Hindu Scripture. He found the Sermon on the Mount, in a living form, in Tolstoi and Ruskin. That's how things developed with him. But since those earlier days he has launched out in all kinds of creative

ideas on his own account, following an inner voice which seems to warn and direct him in the way of Truth.

"Have you realised," I continued, "that Sir Daniel Hamilton, one of the shrewdest of Scotsmen and finest of Christians, immensely admires Gandhi's practical economic programme, and has constantly corresponded with him?"

"Is Gandhi a holy man, such as we read about in Indian stories?" asked Neil. "Is he one whom the villagers worship as a kind of god? Do they come to him and do *puja*? Is that where he gets his magic power from?"

"No one hates that kind of thing," I answered, "more than he does. It worries him to death, and he tries to get out of it. He is most delightfully human. Let me explain that at some length. No one enjoys being laughed at more than he does: for he has a never-failing fund of laughter always rising to the surface, and he is essentially a man of the people. He dresses in the simplest Indian village loin cloth—as a villager, not as a *sannyasi* (ascetic). He never holds himself aloof, and no one is afraid of him. His greatest friends and companions are little children, who have uproarious fun with him. Thus he is no plaster saint with a halo round his head, set on a pedestal to be admired, but a very gentle and lovable one. Like St Francis of old, he's a 'little brother of the poor,' ready to share everything he has with any one who might seem to need it more than he did himself.

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"He has also," I continued, "that unique faculty which St Francis possessed, of feeling the inner suffering of another as if it were his very own. I've been with him when the pain of it has suddenly come upon him, and at such times I've realised how entirely he has identified himself with those who suffer most—especially with the outcastes, whom he calls 'God's children.'"

"Because he's got no private interests to serve and no popularity to win or lose, his will remains as hard as steel when he believes that the cause he advocates is right. At such times he is as uncompromising with his own followers as he is with himself; prison and death have no terrors for him. Yet, the moment the fight is over, which he has waged on behalf of what he feels to be the truth, his heart is set upon peace. If the spirit of reconciliation is present, a settlement can be easily won from him. Thus he is a chivalrous opponent and a most loyal friend."

IV

Safdar Ali, in economic matters, was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi. He believed with all his heart in what has been widely called the Khaddar (home-spun) Programme. Since this fact was well known in the Union Club, we turned to him at this point and asked him to explain Gandhi's position.

"To put it briefly," he said, "India must, by its very geography, be always an agricultural

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country. Its mineral resources are not great, but its supplies of sun and rain are abundant. There are rich alluvial plains, covering hundreds of thousands of square miles, not only in the great Ganges Delta itself, but also in the south and west and north. This alluvial soil, exposed to the sun and watered by the monsoon, seems to recover its fertility with amazing rapidity year after year. It can be made still more fertile by modern scientific methods. Gandhi by no means refuses to utilise these methods, provided they are within the means and competence of village people. This is his one and only test."

"Would he use tractors, as they do in Siberia and Russia?" asked John Murray.

"No," said Safdar, "the Indian village conditions are entirely different. Siberia is a vast wilderness of uncultivated land, India is a closely cultivated area with a dense village population. Any large use of tractors would at once throw out of employment hundreds of thousands of villagers, and drive them into the slums of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras."

"Let's get back to the Khaddar argument," said Alan. "We want very badly to get the picture of that home-spun industry and understand how it helps the poor people."

"Mahatma Gandhi," Safdar continued, "holds that the Indian villagers have all the moral qualities needed for carrying out practical agriculture in a wholesome and worthy fashion."

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They are God-fearing, industrious and thrifty ; inured to hard country fare and able to bear the hot climate. In the past they have shown themselves capable of maintaining a level of prosperity which is strangely lacking to-day. They are peace-loving, in a world of strife. The different conquerors who have swept over their country were not able, in former times, permanently to reduce their standard of living, though it sank from time to time. For as soon as ever the tyranny was over, they started to thrive again."

"What about the British?" asked Alan.
"Were they just the same as the rest?"

"The British penetrated much further and deeper than any who had passed over the villages of India in earlier days. According to Gandhi's estimate, they have ruinously impoverished the village workers, both physically and morally. In former times, he says, the villager had two lungs wherewith to breathe, two hands wherewith to work—Agriculture and Cottage Industries. This twofold occupation was a necessity in the Indian climate. For during the dry heat of the burning, rainless months, home industries, such as the spinning and weaving of cotton goods, alone are possible. The ground is too hard for the plough and there is little to be done in the fields. On the other hand, throughout the damp heat of the monsoon, when the ground is soft and rain is plentiful, agriculture takes up every moment."

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"What about the supply of cotton?" asked Neil Munro. "Where does that come from?"

"The cotton plant has always been indigenous to India. It can be grown almost anywhere with little trouble. Therefore, the home spinning and weaving during the dry, hot months of the year used to provide clothing at a minimum expense, while the rice cultivation in the monsoon months provided food. But the Lancashire cloth came into competition everywhere with these old hand industries. Machine-made goods won their way into the Indian market by their cheapness, novelty and smoothness. Yet even then they would not have penetrated so far into the remote villages, where home-spun was still worn, if they had not received all the prestige of the East India Company to carry them forward. The Government acted, as it were, like a great salesman for the benefit of Lancashire."

"But in England also," said John Murray, "the Industrial Revolution swept away the spinning-wheel and the hand-loom."

"Yes, just what had happened earlier in England has been taking place more slowly, but no less relentlessly, in India. The only difference has been that while Britain was able to recover her economic balance owing to her mineral resources, there has hitherto been no such possibility of recovery in India. For when once the village industries had been abandoned,

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the poor people were bereft, as Gandhi puts it so forcibly, of one of their two lungs, and they have remained in an anæmic condition ever since. Owing to enforced idleness, they have lost many of the moral qualities which they possessed in the past."

"What has been the result of all this?" asked John.

"Since they have now got into the habit of buying their cotton cloth, instead of manufacturing it for themselves, their family income has been diminished. The vicious circle of penury, with its pitiful brood of children born only to die, has been closing in upon them, and there is little chance of escape. That circle of evil becomes still more gruesomely complete when opium and 'country liquor,' sold under Government license, are consumed by the villagers. Idleness for such a long period during the year has proved a fatal temptation, leading them to opium or drink."

"What you've told us," said Neil, "is plain common sense. There's nothing mystical or medieval about that!"

"Certainly not," said Safdar. "Gandhi's programme of hand-spinning and weaving is by no means the fantastic thing which the West has imagined it to be. It has already added millions of rupees to the villagers' yearly income, besides saving the money which they would have spent upon mill-made cloth. No one but Gandhi could have persuaded the villagers to

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take it up again ; but since they have resumed it, there are facts and figures which prove conclusively its working value. It may have a place also in other parts of the world, which are situated as India is, with a long dry season wherein agricultural work is slack."

V

At this point an opportunity occurred to enter into the discussion with a personal experience ; for I had just come back from touring with Mahatma Gandhi.

"I've actually witnessed," I said, "this recovery of villages. They were sunk in penury before and seemed almost past help, being given over to idleness and vice. Their restoration has been due solely to a faithful adherence to Mahatma Gandhi's methods. Therefore, even if he has not yet completely proved his case, he has gone a long way towards it. The very simplicity of his proposal is its greatest merit : for it can be universally applied."

"But what attitude has he adopted towards the Government?" asked Hara, who had listened with attention.

"So eager has he been," I replied, "to help the villagers that more than once, even when non-co-operating, he has offered to co-operate with the Government if it would side with him in this vital concern. He has added one further demand, that the spread of the drug and liquor

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habits, which have been encouraged rather than repressed by the Government licensing system, should be stopped.

VI

"It is interesting to note how rapidly these ideas have gained ground. While in earlier days Mahatma Gandhi was almost alone in his appeal, he has steadily gained support owing to the sound wisdom of his proposals. One example may suffice. Sir George Schuster, the late Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council, speaking at the Royal Society of Arts on the prospects of Indian economic life, said :

"I have always dwelt on the disadvantages of huge urban industrial concentrations, and expressed my doubt as to whether India made any gain for her people in the truest sense by finding employment for a few hundred thousands in this way. I must confess that I have always had great sympathy with some of Mr Gandhi's economic ideas—though it seems to me that his particular proposal of reverting to the hand spinning-wheel involved so great a departure from economic methods of production as to make it impossible on a large scale. But would it not be possible to achieve essentially the same object in a manner that would not be open to this criticism? . . . I should like to see agriculture supplemented by moderate-sized industrial establishments.

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"If such a declaration from a Finance Member of the Government of India does not go the whole way with Mahatma Gandhi, it at least generously acknowledges the soundness of the principle for which he is always working, namely the supplementing of agriculture with village industries. Assuming that Sir George Schuster had been able to obtain Mahatma Gandhi's first-hand knowledge of the extreme simplicity of Indian village life, he might have been inclined to consider even such a primitive method of industry as hand-spinning. In the far north of Scotland, in Norway and Iceland, the spinning-wheel is still used to produce a beautiful yarn, which can be woven into hand-made cloth more durable than that which is made in the mills. The hours of the long dark winter evenings are used in this manner, just as in India the long hot days of the dry weather may be employed for the same purpose."

VII

We all felt that we had entered into a new region of thought based upon a living experience. We should need to consider what we had heard before coming to any practical conclusion. In the end, British rule would be morally judged by the two supreme tests—

1. Whether the daily lot of the millions of peasants had been made easier or harder to bear.

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2. Whether the inner resources of the mind and will had become strengthened or weakened.

We decided to meet again, and if possible to gain the help of an economist who had made a special study of Indian affairs.

CHAPTER XI

THE PRICE OF FOREIGN RULE

I

JOHN MURRAY was studying "Economics" at Balliol, and he had brought with him to our meeting an economist, with a good book knowledge of India. His name was Bruce Martin. As a new-comer, he had gone carefully through the minutes of the previous argument. He told us that he had been impressed most of all by what had been written about the moral evils caused by foreign rule. Strangely enough, these had not attracted his attention seriously before.

"I like your medical analogy," he said. "That comparison with a person who needs a stimulus in order to bring back vital circulation is a good one. From the general study I've made of the earlier period, before the British occupation, it appears to me that things had got very low indeed. You're right there, even from the economic side."

"Yet we're apt," I said, "to exaggerate, and to forget that the Indian villager was going on with his own field cultivation all the while. Many of us were astonished at the way the

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French peasant continued his farm work in the rear of the trenches during the World War. I've read also, in the records of the Intelligence Department at the time of the Mutiny, how just outside the military area round Delhi there were fields ripening with a golden harvest."

"That's true," said Bruce Martin, "and I've taken it into account. But the records of the eighteenth century seem to show that in the north of India very large areas had gone out of cultivation altogether. It was something like certain districts in China to-day, with bandits let loose in all directions. One of the facts which I have noticed has been the increase in the area of cultivated land during the nineteenth century. This can't go on for ever, of course; but it has certainly staved off the evil day of over-population so far."

"But the villagers," said Anil, "have become half-starved in the process."

"Would you call the Punjabi villager half-starved?" asked Neil, turning to Anil quickly.

"No, he's an exception, though even he is getting poorer," said Anil. "But look at Orissa, Bengal, Bihar, and a great part of the United Provinces. Even to-day, as in Sir William Hunter's time, there are millions of human beings merely half-existing, who have hardly as much as a single meal of rice a day with a pinch of salt, and never know what it is to be free from hunger; who wake in the night with the pangs of hunger unrelieved. Nothing

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can describe the misery in those provinces, and they are lands where British rule has been long established."

"I've actually seen this tragedy," said I, "both in Orissa and Bengal. But there's one thing further that I've noticed. The worst poverty in India is mixed up with 'Untouchability.' In the United Provinces, for instance, it's the 'untouchable' who lives at such an indescribably low level. I've seen it. It is the same in South India also."

"Mahatma Gandhi," said Safdar Ali, "has fully recognised that, and for this reason he has linked all his village movements together."

"We've got somehow to find the answer," said Bruce Martin, "to the vexed question whether there has been any improvement in the lot of the poorest, who are outcaste, and therefore untouchable."

"I'm afraid there's been very little *economic* improvement hitherto," said I. "Recently I've had abundant opportunities of seeing things and forming a personal judgment. For instance, it's impossible for me ever to forget an experience I had in Orissa, where a succession of disasters had weakened the whole morale of the people. Year after year there had been either drought or flood. We had come down there to undertake relief work after one of the worst floods. Those whom we tried to help were in utter misery, looking hardly human, with their shrivelled bodies riddled through and through

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with disease. They had lost all courage, and wanted merely to be fed by our volunteers. It seemed almost too much for them to try even to rebuild their own huts. All desire to live had gone out of them as they clung round our rice depots, claiming relief. Our problem was to get back their inner courage and prevent the inroad of morbid despair. What the doctors call 'persistent anæmia' seemed to have set in."

"From the records," said Bruce, "I am inclined to think that the landholders in the north of India advanced in prosperity right up to the Mutiny, and even beyond it; but during the latter part of the nineteenth century other factors, such as congestion of population and excessive subdivision of the land, came in and retarded the progress already made."

"Isn't there," John asked, "something equivalent to a law of diminishing returns, which acts at once wherever the foreign ruler fails to be sensitive to the needs of the country over which he rules?"

John's phrase struck me, and I could see that it had interested Bruce also.

"You mean," I asked, "that when the first stimulating effect of foreign occupation wears off and the whole country settles down again, there is likely to come a reaction?"

"Yes," said John, "that's my point."

"I must think that out," said Bruce, "for it might mean a great deal in regard to Indian

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economics. These spiritual factors count for much. It isn't poverty measured in cash that is most important to register, but poverty measured in feeling."

"I can tell you one thing," said Mohanlal, "the Indian people feel now the misery from which they suffer much more than they did before."

"This matter of feeling the subjection," said Bruce, "is important. I can see it, even from the economic standpoint. A hundred years ago the British were regarded as saviours and helpers; but that character has become profoundly modified as time has gone on. That's your point, isn't it? Well, if it's true, it would make a world of difference."

II

"Mr Gandhi gives his whole case away," said Neil, suddenly changing the subject, "when he refuses to see anything good in British rule. That annoys me in him more than anything else that he does. If things were really as bad as he makes out, our rule would never have lasted all this time. It would have crumbled to pieces long ago."

"What special factors," asked Bruce, taking the Indian side of the argument, in order to test its value, "would you reckon in, while trying to make a fair estimate?"

"Surely," said Neil, "the increase of popu-

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lation is itself a clear proof that the conditions of life have improved." ("That's very doubtful," Bruce said in a low voice.) "Then, again, you yourself have admitted that the land area under cultivation has largely increased. Along with this, the value of the soil has gone up. Then, if you look at commerce, both exports and imports have risen in a remarkable manner, and this shows that the country is producing more, and absorbing more, than it did before. India has become one of the chief 'industrial' countries in the world."

"Aren't we really losing, rather than gaining, on our exchange of goods?" asked Anil doubtfully.

"This might have been true," said Neil, "before the Fiscal Convention came into force; for India was then bound up with the Free Trade policy of Great Britain and could not support her own growing industries. But the practice of tariff regulation during the last ten years has carried India a long way forward in the direction of financial freedom."

Anil shook his head. "I doubt it," he said. "We're only tied up afresh in other ways. There's no real freedom yet."

"Perhaps," said Neil, "the strongest argument for the recent benefit of British rule is to review the last few years and watch how India has weathered the storm. Is it possible to call a government 'satanic,' which has brought India successfully through all that crisis?"

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There was much that could have been said in reply, and Neil had no first-hand knowledge of the things about which he spoke.

"Do you realise," I asked, "that India has been on the very edge of an agrarian revolution, out of sheer misery? Do you know that the indebtedness has been so great, that it has been like a mill-stone round the neck of almost every Indian peasant? We mustn't keep a blind eye, Neil, to glaring facts like these!"

III

"But what about the present situation?" Bruce asked me. "Let's stick to the main issue. You've heard my own opinion. What is your estimate?"

"My position," I told him, "as far as I have been able to think it out, is that those earlier beneficial days of British rule are now over. The good that Great Britain could do has now been accomplished. If, therefore, we still cling to power and prevent Indians, who have the capacity, from governing themselves, the good that has been done by us in the past will be turned to harm; and there are ominous signs that this is already taking place.

"No doubt," I continued, "if I'd been born in India and had passed through all these difficult years without a break, I should speak exactly as Mahatma Gandhi does. The whole vivid picture of the present evils under which

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India is suffering would be thrown back into the past. But I was born in the north of England, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and therefore I have had to keep on revising the deep-rooted traditions which were implanted in me when I was young."

"What is your opinion," Bruce asked me, "about Mr Gandhi's village programme? I've studied the theory of home-spinning very carefully, but have never been able to make up my mind about it."

"Here," I told him, "I'm wholly one with him; for his diagnosis of the disease is clearly correct."

"Do you mean," he asked, "that the villager requires a supplementary industry?"

"Yes," I replied. "But when all the blame for what has happened is laid on the Government, I'm in doubt. No! The main reason why spinning dropped out of favour in the villages was a simple one. There had come over the world a great eagerness to try the cheap articles produced by the new mills. The love of novelty is one of the deepest instincts in the human breast. A strong tide of material prosperity had swept over the world, and people thought the millennium was at hand. Another tide of thought is now needed to set the moral value of things right. Gandhi has done more than any other living soul to bring this new moral emphasis into prominence."

IV

Abdul Majid had not been at all satisfied with the course which the discussion had taken. He was eager to discuss much more radical issues along socialist lines. Gandhi's spinning programme, he said, was out of date. His insistence on non-violence as the only moral means to bring about a social revolution in India was impractical. Thus Abdul shared the "Moscow" contempt for what he called the insignificant achievement of Khaddar in the sphere of Indian Economics. This was a time when the whole world was being turned upside down, and great things might be accomplished by rapid action.

"Not by violence," I urged.

"Why not?" asked Abdul. "What's the use of merely dealing with symptoms, when the root of the disease is left untouched?"

"That's begging the whole question," I answered. "What is the root of the disease? Isn't it selfishness? And isn't violence akin to selfishness? Don't we get very near to the fatal death-trap of all hasty actions, namely, that any means can be used to bring about a desired end? Do you really think that violence can drive out violence?"

"No," said Abdul; "but, all the same, Gandhi's method's far too slow. While he is touching one per cent of the population, the other ninety-nine per cent are dying of starvation and oppression."

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"I'm afraid," said Bruce Martin, laughing, "that we shall remain here all night, if we get tied up in an argument concerning the use of force as a means of bringing about a social revolution."

"Force is not the Christian way," said Alan.

"The Christian nations of to-day believe in it," said Abdul Majid, "and I believe in it also."

"There we differ," said I, "and I am on the side of Gandhi, with all the simple-minded village people in India. They have suffered for centuries, but still are able to hold up their heads in the world to-day, while the militant races have gone under."

"I don't accept that," said Abdul Majid. "The only weapon that's any good to-day is a strong right arm. That's the only thing you Englishmen respect."

"Not all of us," I pleaded. "Remember how your own Prophet declared, 'Let there be no compulsion in religion.' I deeply honour that word."

"But the whole question," said Mulchand, "of Capital and Labour needs to be discussed. That's what Young India's facing. We're not merely nationalists as we were before. We're socialists—and we've got a socialist programme."

"Do you really think," said Bruce Martin, "that the doctrinaire socialism of the West can be applied unchanged to the East?"

"Not at all," said Mulchand. "We're not so foolish as that; but there are human rights

which every one can claim so long as those extravagances exist which we see around us every day. Christ surely taught that lesson when He set before us the parable of Dives and Lazarus."

Bruce Martin looked at his watch. "I'm afraid," he said, "I've got a class to take in a short time. May I say one thing more before I go? The British rulers never realised the harm they were doing by encouraging the sale, in Indian villages, of cheap mill-made goods. They were confident that they were conferring a benefit; for the Manchester School was in the ascendancy and the best liberal thought paid homage to it."

"What was your own opinion," asked Anil, turning to me, "before you came out to India?"

"I was all in favour of Free Trade," I answered, "and most Englishmen of my own generation shared the same outlook. I can well remember my astonishment when I heard this doctrine being called in question by my friend Susil Rudra, who was Professor of Indian Economics. Certainly, at that time, I believed with all my heart that Free Trade had proved an immense blessing to the poor of India and that they had prospered under British rule. Only when I was brought into closest touch with Mahatma Gandhi, whose practical knowledge is quite unrivalled, was my earlier belief shaken."

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"But what about Lancashire?" asked Neil. "How will Lancashire get on, if Gandhi's programme succeeds?"

"The Lancashire working men and women," I said, "whom I know well, have had a great shock. They were confident that they were helping the poor people in India. Now they are told that they are hindering them. It will take some time for them to adjust their minds to that new conception of their own industrial life. But when they know that they are hindering Indian development they will give way."

"Just one more point remains," Anil urged, "which Neil brought forward, namely, the rapid increase in the Indian population."

"That's by far the most serious danger," said Bruce Martin. "Yet no one seems to care two pence about it. Think of it—thirty-four million people added in ten years—more than three million every year! Where will it all stop?"

"Whatever blame there is for the high birth- and death-rate," said I, "must be shared between Government and people. For the evils of child-marriage can only be remedied by the people themselves."

"That's true," said Anil, "but Government's military extravagance has led to the starving of education; and illiteracy makes all reform difficult."

"We're involved there," said Bruce, "in a vicious circle, and mutual recrimination is useless."

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I'm afraid, however, my time is up, and I must hurry away."

Before we parted we thanked him for giving us so much of his time.

"Not a bit of it," he answered; "the thanks are all on my side. The truth is, the problem of India's poverty is almost insoluble. Only on a world scale can facts of such magnitude be dealt with; and this question is the biggest world question of the future."

CHAPTER XII

THE CULTURAL GAIN AND LOSS

THE Summer Term at Oxford was rapidly drawing to its close, and our last meeting had come. It was one of those perfect evenings when twilight lingers and the stars come out one by one as night draws on. We were all seated in a College garden, and friendliness was the very air we breathed.

This time we had not chosen our subject. We were expecting to sum up what had gone before, when Anil broke the silence. "I'm afraid we've left out," he began, "the most important matter in the whole discussion. I can't think how we did it!"

"What's that?" I asked with some surprise.

"The cultural loss which comes from the continuance of such a foreign rule as yours. Surely this is far the greatest harm we have received, and also the hardest to repair."

"Didn't we deal with that point," Neil asked, "when we freely accepted the fact of the Indian Renaissance? Wasn't it decided at that time that there had been a real gain during last century, even in the literature of the common people."

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"I was just getting to that," said Anil. "We accepted, perhaps too readily, the theory of the gain which came to India, owing to the first impact of British rule; and Safdar was intrigued by the analogy with Norman and Saxon in England. I wasn't quite so taken with that analogy as he was, because I've studied the British period in Indian history through and through, and the analogy is somewhat misleading. But I'm quite ready to grant you that, in the first instance, after British rule was established, there was a creative period in Indian literature and religious thought, with great personalities behind it. We may well call that a Renaissance. But what about the after-effects of foreign rule? What is happening to-day?"

"You're quite right in drawing our attention to that point," said I. "Don't you remember the emphasis I laid on Seeley's pronouncement, that *prolonged* subjection was harmful?"

"Yes," said Anil, "I noticed that very carefully indeed. As a matter of fact, we all did; for you made it abundantly clear. But while we worked out at length the harm that had been done in other directions, we left this cultural side almost untouched. Yet, in the long run, nothing can be of greater consequence."

"I agree," said I, "for it is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.' The spirit rules the body; the body ought not to rule the spirit."

"No, indeed," said Anil. "Do you re-

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member that other sentence in Seeley about 'creating a notion that it was shameful to assist the foreigner in maintaining his dominion'? Well, we've now got to that point culturally: for we've reached a complete deadlock. The reason is, that in our heart of hearts we're all of us conscious that if this foreign rule is continued much longer, and no real power is given us to rule over ourselves, it's going to kill, not our bodies only, but our minds. The stimulating effect of the first impact with the West has worn off. The novelty has disappeared. Can't you all see here, at Oxford, where intellectual genius is worshipped, how a foreign rule of your British type must mean for us, in the long run, merely second-rate, third-rate and even fourth-rate imitation, with all its soul-deadening effects?"

"How do you account," asked Alan, "for the rapid deterioration which is clearly happening to-day?"

"Let's get right down to facts," said Anil. "When you British first came out to India, you brought with you some really great men, who met our great men on equal terms. Genius met genius, and the sparks flew. Think, for instance, of Duff and Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Look at outstanding statesmen, and men of intellect such as Munro, Metcalfe, Malcolm and Elphinstone. *They* didn't need to pass Rowlatt Acts in order to keep us quiet. We were of one mind with them, and they were of one mind

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"I was just getting among non-officials, remember accepted, perhaps that strange genius Derozio. gain which can who had Indian blood in his impact of Bribe clapped in prison at once if trigued by the cher in Bengal at the present time. in Englande days there was freedom everywhere. analogy the new wine. It went to the head. British En in a later generation you sent out throughen of genius as Edwin Arnold, who leadin'ated our religion and our literature. in there is there a Macaulay or an Edwin Arnold lish the Civil Service to-day? Who cares a straw for our literature and culture? Who among the civilians at Simla gives a moment's thought to the study of the Indian Renaissance about which we have just spoken? When has this Government patronised, in the slightest degree, our great men of art and letters—our poets and artists—in accordance with the immemorial custom of the East?"

"You've got to ask a more fundamental question," said Neil, with scorn. "How *can* a Secretariat patronise anything? When my uncle was out in India, District Officers lived their own independent life and were not employed in writing endless reports. They had leisure to cultivate a taste for Indian literature, and also a real love for the village people."

"Why, Neil," I said, with some bitterness—for I had groaned under the misery of it for many years—"they haven't got leisure to-day to cultivate a taste for their own literature, let

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alone that of India. They've dropped all the old interest that used to exist in Art and Poetry as lovable things in themselves. There's the root of the mischief. Only one who loves Art itself will take a living interest in Indian Art, and study its forms till the whole subject becomes a passionate search for new beauty. Only one who deeply loves Shelley and Keats will want to read Tagore in the original Bengali, and refuse to be content with translations. But the truth is we've reached a series of lean years even in Great Britain, especially since the War. Each day's being crowded out with motors, cinemas, wireless and other interests, while the true culture of life itself, through the Fine Arts, is falling into decay. Add to this, in India, the mass of files which the Secretariat system has introduced, and you kill the soul of poetry in the Civil Service.

"Take another point," I continued. "When I was in Delhi I made a special study of the last days of the Moghuls: for there were still living men of letters, like Munshi Zaka Ullah, who had intimate recollections of those times. I found out from Hindus and Muslims alike that there was a deep affection lingering on for that remarkable line of rulers, in spite of the decadence which had taken place. Old Bahadur Shah loved poetry up to the very last. He had his own poet's *nom de plume* like the rest of them and wrote verses. He would call every one alike to his Court within the Delhi Fort. There

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he held his 'Kingdom of Letters,' wherein there was no distinction of race or religion, and no Hindu-Muslim tension. But this has all died away now, with deplorable results. Think of any of our present Governors holding his court in a 'Kingdom of Letters,' and writing poetry ! ”

Asha had been listening intently. She too had made a study of this subject. “ Haven’t you noticed one thing,” she asked, “ which shows what has happened ? The Moghul Emperors, just like the British rulers, were foreigners. They came from Central Asia, where it is bitterly cold for nearly half the year. But they went out of their way to acclimatise themselves to the habits of our country. They were true patrons of art and literature. As a result, we Hindus look upon Akbar and Jehangir and Shah Jahan as our very own. Through them we have learnt to admire Islam, as a religion of culture, which has brought new gifts to India, our Motherland. When we see the great Moghul architecture, or study the miniature paintings, or learn from our childhood to love Persian poetry, we absorb these things, and make them a part of our own religious nature. We have even taken something from the music they brought with them from Central Asia and Persia. The whole culture of Sind and the Punjab is full of these things.”

“ Don’t you find the same great quality,” I asked, “ in English literature ? ”

“ Ah, yes,” said Asha, “ that’s the side of

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your culture that we *have* absorbed. We love Shelley and Keats and Wordsworth. Our Bengali literature bears the mark of their influence on every page. But you, on your side—have any of *you* taken the trouble to study *our* literature and culture? Just one or two, perhaps, but what are they among so many?"

"Let's come back to the facts," pleaded Anil. "Let's find out what's actually happening. Take Bengal. No historian could doubt for a moment that the literature of Bengal last century showed a great advance. There was an intellectual and spiritual revival, which went on from one generation to another. You've only to read the story of the Tagore household, as it is told in Rabindranath's *Reminiscences*, or to dip into a novel like *Gora*. Then there were women, like Aru and Toru Dutt. All this was something to be proud of. But look at Bengal to-day. There's no lack of intellectual genius. Think of Aurobindo and Monomohan Ghose, and Barin, all from one family! But repression has crushed the heart out of our young people. Bengal has no means to-day of giving free expression to its deepest inner thoughts. The finest genius is being wasted—pitilessly wasted."

"Here in Oxford, at least," said John Murray, "you have perfect freedom."

"Yes," replied Anil, "that's quite true, and we're grateful for it, as Asha also will tell you. But do you realise, Alan, what awaits me when

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I get home? Oh, I know," he added, as Alan touched his arm, "I know, Alan, that a great deal of it's our own fault. Don't think we don't blame ourselves. We sometimes even overdo it, and give way to despair. Think what Satyen wrote—that tenderest soul in the world, who was crushed beneath the weight of his own burden of sorrow, and died young."

Anil then recited, with intense emotion, the words of Satyendranath Datta's poem—

Crushed are we on the cross of slavery all our lives,
Our politics—a crown of thorns,
Our social life—a bed of spikes,
Which pierces us at every movement of our bodies.

Anil's eyes were filled with tears which he brushed away with haste.

Alan could hardly bear it. "Anil," he cried, "don't take it so much to heart! We're with you—we of the younger generation. We *do* understand! Oh, believe me, Anil, the heart of England is with you in your longing to be free. But can't your people drop their secret plots and murders? We love freedom. But as long as the world lasts, secret violence like that will only be met by measures of repression in return. It always gives rise to a vicious circle from which there's never any escape."

"We realise all that," said Safdar. "But what are you doing to those who practise *non-violence*? Think of a pure-hearted man like Mahatma Gandhi, forced back into prison time after time!"

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"Didn't he declare," asked Neil, "that he was a rebel, and at 'war' with the British Government? How was it possible to do otherwise than imprison him?"

"Oh, they never tried to understand him," said Safdar. "They merely called out, 'Off with his head,' like the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*. Why couldn't you see that you had to deal with the greatest spiritual genius in the world to-day? Think of him; and then think of your own politicians."

"But Lord Irwin," said Alan, "didn't misunderstand him in that manner."

"No," said Anil; "only unfortunately you cancelled Lord Irwin's policy the very first moment you could do so."

Mulchand intervened. "Let's face realities," he said. "Every one's heartily sick and tired of fighting, even by civil resistance. But every one's also sick and tired of the present Government, and would turn it out to-morrow if they got the chance."

"When you're in this state," said Asha, "all your culture goes to pieces. Even a 'war' of civil resistance absorbs all the country's energies. There's nothing left over for poetry and song. Your own poets in England, like Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon, had to dig trenches. The war atmosphere's foul with poison gas. It kills all culture."

"But we're not at 'war' with India," urged Alan.

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"No," said Asha, "you're not at open war with us. We shouldn't be here, if you were. But all the same we have to resist your domination. We do it by non-violence, and that takes up all our energies. We believe our cause is just and, as Mahatma Gandhi once said, we'd almost dare to ask you to come over on to our side, so that you might fight against your worst selves."

"What can we do to help matters?" asked Neil Munro.

"There's only one thing to be done," said Anil. "You've got to learn over again to *trust* us; to meet us as equals, just as you do here in Oxford. You've got to be on our side in our longing to be free, and not to bind us, hard and fast, with safeguards and reservations which show a fatal lack of trust."

"Do go on, Anil," said Alan; "tell us all that is in your heart."

"Shall I tell you a dream I had the other night?" asked Anil, with great diffidence.

"Yes, do!" said Neil. "We want to get at the truth; and to-night we meet for the last time."

"All day long," said Anil, "some lines of Tennyson had been ringing in my head:

In Love, if Love be Love, if Love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

and then the conclusion:

So trust me not at all, or all in all.

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"That night," Anil continued, his voice becoming stronger, "I went to sleep and dreamt that we were called upon by God to build a large and spacious house to live in, and all the materials were given us and put in order. There were stones already cut of different sizes. Then a dispute arose about the way of building, and in a moment everything was in terrible confusion. Each one seized the stone which was nearest to him in order to kill his brother. The noise became terrific; and then, as suddenly as it had appeared, the nightmare dream came to an end.

"After that, I lay awake half the night, wondering what the dream meant. While I lay thus, thinking, thinking, the lines of Tennyson came back to my mind :

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

and the last line more than any other :

So trust me not at all, or all in all.

"Then I began to go over our discussions, and I could see that behind all our arguments, on either side, was a want of faith. We were trying to score for our own side."

Alan had been listening intently, as if eager to speak, but he restrained himself, and Anil went on :

"Alan, you and I have learnt completely to trust one another, here at Oxford. We don't

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use arguments to throw at each other—like those stones in my dream. We can really say the words :

So trust me not at all, or all in all.

We've learnt that great secret, haven't we? We know that friendship can only be built upon Love and Trust. I heard, the other day, in Chapel, some splendid words,

'Except the Lord build the house,
Their labour is but lost that build it,'

and they came back to me after my dream."

Neil Munro was the first to break the silence which followed. "Anil," he said, "you don't know how hard you hit me when you said that we were trying to score for our own side. I see your point about Trust. We've been wanting you to trust us all the while ; but we've not been ready to trust you."

"Shall I tell you the honest truth, Neil?" said Anil, laughing, as his mood changed from grave to gay. "We're such an absurdly affectionate people that you could get almost anything out of us if you only showed us affection, instead of despising us and calling us cowards."

"What would you *do*, then," asked John Murray, "if you were in our shoes?"

"I'd get rid of all those safeguards as soon as possible ; and the moment we Indians came to any agreement among ourselves, I'd register it straight away and give us ample leave to act

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upon it. Above all, I would insist on never for a moment making capital out of our divisions."

"You'll forgive me asking the question," said Neil, "but isn't the real object you have in view complete separation? Wouldn't you want to leave the Empire?"

"The Empire!" exclaimed Safdar Ali. "Why, the Empire wouldn't exist, if only you acted in that way. We should all be free and independent nations, as we ought to be, and you would be free as well."

"Neil!" said Anil, who had been eager to speak. "Don't you see that your very question has led you back into a vicious circle of distrust? Can't you come out of it? Can't you trust us completely?"

Neil nodded his head and smiled. Then Asha said to her brother, "Don't forget the lack of trust on our side also. When we've got so little trust in ourselves and can't trust each other, we try to throw all this distrust on other people. But that's no good at all. We've got to build up self-confidence first. Then other things will follow."

The night had drawn on and the moon had just begun to appear behind the lattice of the trees. We were all unwilling to break off, but the time had come at last, and we had to get back to our rooms. I saw Neil and Anil earnestly engaged in carrying on the argument as they walked away. Alan was with them.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY TO PEACE

I

HERE, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter. This volume has attempted to show, in the guise of a dialogue, that there has been a dual line of development running through the past record of Britain's connection with India. One line, which I have called the racial principle, has continually led to strife, because it has roused up racial antagonism in return, whenever it has been put into practice. The other line, which I have called the liberal principle, or the principle of political freedom, has led to reconciliation, progress and peace.

Whenever the racial principle has been uppermost in men's minds, the emphasis has been laid upon the idea of Empire, wherein the British race must at all costs and at all times be the ruling power. Indians, not being members of the ruling race, are regarded as subjects rather than citizens, and India is thought of as the "possession" of Great Britain. The imperial power in this case must always be supreme. The subject race, being inferior, has to be thankful if it receives material benefits

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from the superior power; but it cannot claim equality.

Along this second line of development political independence becomes impossible. Therefore it carries no moral sanction with it. Ultimately, it relies upon the passive contentment brought about in the things of the body, and leaves out of account the things of the soul. Its weapon is force.

When, on the contrary, the principle of political freedom is aimed at by the power from outside to which has been committed the direction of affairs, then the development of free institutions becomes the primary concern. Higher education is advanced as rapidly as possible with that end in view. Racial equality follows as a natural corollary, and is fostered in all the processes of government as an integral part of the liberal principle itself.

The great Victorians, from Macaulay to Gladstone, never regarded India as a conquered country. They held that the soul of India was free; to be respected in the spirit of freedom and on equal terms. They were not imperialists, in the racial sense of the term. Therefore they encouraged to the utmost freedom of education, freedom of the press, and freedom of speech. They appealed not to force, but to goodwill.

When the theme is thus divided out, it becomes luminously clear that only the second line of approach can offer a secure moral foundation

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for the future. As a Christian, my ardent hope is that this liberal principle will prevail; for to me there can be no question that it is more in accord with the mind and will of Christ.

But if, by some fatal mischance, under the cover of specious phrases the racial principle tends in the long run to predominate, then I can see no hope of future settlement, but only the certainty of bitter, unceasing conflict. British rule in India will then become one of the greatest tragedies of history. It will represent fair hopes raised high, but dashed to the ground owing to the fatal temptation of power to cling to possession at all cost.

For, in that case, this racial principle itself, which had already been the curse of India for centuries past, and had led to "Untouchability" and a thousand other evils, will have returned in a new form, far more deadly than before. No Christian could defend it; for it would be morally indefensible.

All around in Asia, Indians watch the nations of the East governing themselves. Afghanistan has its own independence. Persia, Turkey have theirs. But India, one of the greatest countries of the world, not only in its population but also in its literature, religion and culture, has no independence at all. Whenever some important crisis arises, the final word lies with Great Britain.

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II

Beyond all this, as I have fully shown, lies the Colour Bar, from which Indians suffer in almost every part of the world, and especially within the British Dominions. The modern East, and India in particular, will not tolerate any longer insults which were patiently borne in days gone by. The temper of Asia is rising, and Europe can no longer bestride the rest of the world "like a Colossus." It is noticed by every thoughtful Indian that this evil has its centre in the Anglo-Saxon world, and has become entrenched within the Christian Church.

This brings us to the heart of the subject, which may be stated in the following terms :

"If Great Britain comes to stand for a 'White Race Empire,' wherein Indians are to be treated as racial inferiors, they will have none of it."

III

It is futile to go on framing Constitutions which have distrust at the very centre and safeguards attached to every clause: for this is to build on fear and to create suspicion in return.

If, on the other hand, we could learn from Christ that love alone can cast out the torment of fear; that true kingship consists in humble service; that by losing life we save it; then all might be well. The moral problem between

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the two countries would vanish, as it did among those care-free undergraduates at Oxford.

For though we may speak with the tongues of men and of angels in India; and though we may have all knowledge and understand all mysteries; and though we may be eager, in our zeal for reform, to improve the lot of India's poor: yet, if we have not got that love which is patient and forbearing; which does not vaunt itself and is not puffed up, we are nothing. What we do will not abide; for we shall be finally judged there, not by what we do, but what we are.

CHAPTER XIV

A GLEAM OF HOPE

THE sun is setting at Simla over the mountains with an amazing beauty of light and colour and shade. Yet there are ominous signs of thunder and storm, which give awe to the scene and sadness to the mind.

The symbol fits in with the theme of this volume which has tried to represent the light and shade and colour of human life in the two countries which I love most on earth—Great Britain and India. Thunder and storm are in the air to-day and sadness reigns, because there is as yet no harmony and peace. But in the end the sunshine will break forth out of the very heart of the storm-clouds themselves, if only we cling to faith and hope, and do not give way to despair.

For in spite of the atmosphere of resentment in the East against Europe, which is everywhere apparent, I have often been touched to find at Oxford and Cambridge how eagerly Indian students have sought for aid in making known among their English friends the true moral situation as it exists in India to-day, causing them such pain at heart. Their sense of justice

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has been hurt most of all, and the wound has gone very deep. Also, I have found a corresponding anxiety to sympathise among the British students whom I have met, and opportunities have been freely given me of explaining the facts as I have known them.

Although, therefore, the immediate prospect has its dark shadows, there are certain aspects that even now bring a gleam of light into the picture. For, looking back, it becomes abundantly clear that some of the deepest loyalties, both of the spiritual and intellectual life, have united British friends with Indian friends, as individuals, on the basis of perfect freedom. We have suffered together in our common sorrows; we have rejoiced together in our common joys. These things remain, while much that is transitory has vanished.

Memories, most sacred of all, are still fresh concerning lives laid down for one another in times of stress and peril. If there is no "greater love than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," then truly there are noble records of that "greater love" on either side, both Indian and British, which must bind us with invisible bonds in one body and one spirit.

Furthermore, there are those who have gone forth with a high purpose from a dearly cherished family-life in Britain to make India their own home. They have had their children born to them in India. These, when they have grown up, have looked upon India as the land

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of their birth, and have loved it with loyal affection. Some, even, have maintained their home ties with India right up to the third and fourth generation.

It would be unthinkable that all these precious links should be destroyed in the heat of the present controversy. Rather, when the dross has been burnt away, such old intimacies and dear affections will shine out again like gold, purified seven times in the fire. Much that has happened may rightly be forgotten on both sides, but these things will always be remembered.

How strong these personal ties of affection are may be easily understood from certain things that I have witnessed in Great Britain. Indian students have told me, on the one hand, of their exceeding bitterness of heart at what is happening to-day in India, and the misery of hope so long deferred. On the other hand, their love for the ancient seats of learning in Britain, where lifelong college friendships are made, has been deeply touching. Appreciation of the kindness they have received from those with whom they stayed has been continually on their lips.

Still further, there is always some individual companion who is attached to one or other of them with a sincere devotion. There will be at least one friend to whom their confidence has been given without any reserve. These exceptions appear to me to prove the rule, that the present bitterness itself is a sign of love that has been very deeply wounded and is now

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passing through a strong reaction. For as Coleridge has truly said :

. . . to be wrath with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.

Yet if once full freedom, along with equal racial status, is willingly acknowledged as a matter of right and justice, then I have no doubt that the old loyalties and personal affections will return.

We may well take heart, therefore, and firmly believe that in the future, as well as in the past, men and women will be raised up from both sides, who will be able to point forward to that one human brotherhood, which is the goal of all our striving. Their united work of reconstruction, starting from a firm moral basis, will remain strongly established long after the politicians have had their say.

For the union of the human race, transcending all the narrow limitations which hamper us to-day, is the one supreme end ordained by God that lies before us. If only these storm-clouds of suspicion and mistrust can be cleared away, goodwill between India and Britain may even yet be renewed, and become a token of the final unity of mankind. Therefore, this present urgent demand in India for political justice and equal racial treatment cannot possibly be dismissed, as if it were but little concern of ours. It is the deep concern of every lover of mankind.

No one who utters sincerely the sacred name

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of Christ with heart allegiance, can refuse to follow Him along these paths. None can fail to obey Him when He speaks to us in a manner which touches the future of humanity so intimately as this. For in everything we do to India, Christ Himself stands before us and speaks the word—"Ye did it unto Me."

Far more closely than we sometimes care to remember, we ourselves have had in our own hands the making of India's present condition—her poverty, her hunger, her illiteracy. We ourselves have grown rich, while India has remained one of the most poverty-stricken and illiterate countries in the world. On our heads lies the blame.

When, therefore, we turn from our own selfish striving and listen to His voice, our sympathy with India's suffering will be the first thought in our minds that will take the place of impatience and disdain. But if we are determined to hold India selfishly by force; if we yield to craven fear, sinking lower and lower, as repression follows repression, and violence leads on to further violence, then the future will be dark indeed, not only for India and Great Britain, but also for the rest of the world.

NOTES

A.—ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THANKS

For many historical details in this volume I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to a recent important book called *The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, by Thompson and Garratt, published by Macmillan, which has given full value to the benefits derived from that rule, without glossing over or ignoring its defects. As a help to my wider thinking, I owe much also to Mervyn Davies's *Warren Hastings*, published by Ivor Nicholson and Watson.

My gratitude is due to many Indian and English friends who have read these pages in type and offered valuable suggestions; also to Mrs Allen and Mr Jaipal Singh of Achimota College; the Rev. S. G. Williamson of Wesley College, Kumasi, West Africa; and to Messrs Azmat Ali and Sharif of Simla, for typing and re-typing my manuscript.

B.—BENGAL IN 1769

Mervyn Davies, in his *Warren Hastings*, gives the following account of Bengal in 1769:

"The general condition of Bengal was every bit as bad as in the Carnatic. Here not war, but famine had been the deadly agent of desolation. The failure of the rains of 1769 throughout the greater part of the province had deprived the people of their supply of food for the following year. The result was one of the most appalling disasters in the recorded history of India. Nearly the whole of the two provinces of Bengal and Bihar was

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devastated. We read in the official reports of the Resident at Murshidebad that the living were feeding on the dead, and the streets were choked with corpses. Scenes of like horror were witnessed in every town and village. No less than one-third of the population, according to the best estimates, perished; according to others, it was a half. Whole districts were left entirely depopulated and returned to jungle.

"If this had been the only misfortune to overtake Bengal in these seven years, the story would have been tragic enough, but, as though an avenging deity had determined to ruin the country almost beyond hope of redemption, it had been accompanied by a complete collapse of government. The Company was not responsible for the famine; but it, and its agents, were largely to blame for the second disaster. The heavy hand of Clive had fallen for the space of two years on the English officials, and he had striven manfully to curb the abuses and reintroduce a sense of decency and discipline. But though the reforms that he made in the service were valuable, he had not touched the real root of the trouble; so far from improving the state of the province and the lot of the hapless peasants, he had in a measure made them worse" (p. 72).

In an earlier passage the same author writes :

"One thing only had brought these Englishmen to India, one thing only held them there. Money. Their object was to make enough money so that they could return to England, there to live in ease and comfort for the rest of their days. And they wished to make it quickly. Not only because they found no pleasure in their exile, but because for most of them life in India was a race against death, the climate being such that for a white man to live there for long at a time when the laws of health were little understood and still less observed was not a little hazardous" (p. 20).

C.—WARREN HASTINGS ON THE GITA

In Mervyn Davies's recently published volume on *Warren Hastings*, the following letter to his wife is quoted :

" My friend Wilkins, has lately made me a present of a most wonderful work of antiquity, and I am going to present it to the public. Among many precepts of fine morality I am particularly delighted with the following because it has been the invariable rule of my later life, and often applied to the earlier state of it, before I had myself reduced it to the form of a maxim in writing. It is this : '*Let the motive be in the deed, and not in the event.* Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction. Depend upon application'—that is, as is afterwards explained, the application of the rule of moral right to its consonant practice, without care for the event as it may respect ourselves. '*Perform thy duty, abandon all thought of the consequence, and make the event equal whether it terminate in good or evil ; for such an equality is called application.*'"

D.—LIONEL CURTIS ON FOREIGN RULE

The following passage from Lionel Curtis's *Civitas Dei* (p. 117) gives a picture of what is likely to happen under foreign rule :

"In countries ruled by foreigners whose views are in fundamental conflict with those of their subjects, political factions tend to develop on similar lines. The rulers enter into relations with such of the native race as are willing to act as their agents. They naturally endeavour to make this section feel that its interests are identical with their own, and, with this object in view, often entrust them with extensive powers. The people at large view with disfavour those of their race who are helping the foreigner

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to rule them. The native agents themselves regard with suppressed dislike the foreigners whose authority it is their interest to maintain. The best friends of the foreign authority are usually to be found in the classes more interested in business than politics. They fear disorders, which any attempt to eject the foreigner will necessitate. On the other hand, they are chafed by the failures and abuses from which no government is exempt. They seek reforms without revolution, but are seldom satisfied with such reforms as are actually made. There is, also, the party mainly drawn from the young and the poorer classes, who, with little to lose but their lives and with no experience of administrative problems, mistrust all measures for reform which are not based on physical force."

E.—THE "SAHIB" ATTITUDE

The Rev. Dr D. J. Fleming has given the following picture of the difficulties of the "Sahib" attitude which confront the young missionary when he comes out to India for the first time :

"In any field it is hard enough for missionaries to free themselves from a domineering and autocratic attitude which seems—even when falsely based—to be a natural characteristic of western races. But missionaries in India especially are played upon by innumerable social forces, that tell upon the life, moulding it in spite of principle and reason. In India the white man is a 'Sahib'; every one makes way for the wearer of the sun-hat; people salaam; policemen salute; the many little symbols of a submissive attitude, instilled by decades of British rule, are exhibited toward the missionary without the asking. All the more does he find himself surrounded by suggestions of superiority when he mingles with those classes from whom converts have come. Small wonder it is, that with the passing of the years, unless it has been consciously and prayerfully resisted, little ways of arrogance and patronising manifest themselves."

F.—“CHRISTMAS DAY”

[I have been often asked for a full translation of Satyendranath Datta's poem on “Christmas Day,” which I quoted briefly in *Christ and Labour*. I owe to my friend, K. M. Sarkar, of St Stephen's College, Delhi, the translation given below. He writes: “Satyendranath Datta (1881-1922) is a well-known figure of the literary world of Bengal. Like Shelley and Keats, though only allowed to sing for a few brief years, he has left a volume of lyric poetry remarkable for its sweetness, simplicity, pathos and idealism. His life was a counterpart of his poetry—full of gracious deeds. His heart was full of love for his country and his people, especially the down-trodden. This poem was written after the War (1920) on Christmas Day,—the Day of peace and goodwill.”]

“Though they do not call me Christian, I bow to you
on your day of birth, O Christ! the beloved Son of God
—the saintliest of Saints.

“Worshipped by wise men, O Shepherd! O poorest of
the poor! the world owns its great debt of love to you.

“With your heart-strings you bound this world to
God and called him ‘Father’ in gladness like a child.
The world looked up in wonder at this new name. The
men of religion were enraged and the wicked conspired.
The sceptics laughed at what they thought was but a
hollow claim; but the blood shed on the Cross made that
claim secure.

“Light came from beyond the darkness of death. The
song of victory arose. Your death gave everlasting life
to men. You bridged the gulf between heaven and earth
and glorified the world by your advent. The baptism
that conquered death is not touched by loss or gain, by
failure or success.

“Therefore do we call Christmas ‘the Great Day,’ the
very thought of which expands the heart and kills all
selfishness. We love and revere you, though not called
Christians. Asia claims you—her blood flows in your

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veins. We, little men of a great land, lift up our tired eyes to you in wonder, crushed as we are under the cross of multi-form servitude all our lives. Our politics—our crown of thorns; our society—a bed of spikes, which pierces us at every movement.

"We drift, like rudderless ships, on the ocean of life,—and our miseries multiply. The tyranny of might levels us to the ground. The heartless and the wicked vie with each other in the work of destruction. The cynic laughs, as hypocrisy strangles the throat of truth. The roar of the howitzers drowns the voice of prayer. Humanity bleeds, while Thugs flourish. The innocent suffer. These agonise your heart and with fresh nails crucify you every day.

"By persecuting you and abusing her power, Rome lost her glory and was reduced to dust. In their perversity, men have forgotten the lesson of history; they build a house of cards and are proud of their achievement. Their chariots in mad fury crush mankind under their wheels and raise clouds of dust. Christianity is lip-worship and too feeble to withstand the doctrine of Nietzsche. The world stands aghast and speechless at Europe's endless lust of power. Civilisation gives way as avarice grows. Reverence evaporates and culture faints. Imperialism and materialism hold high carnival. On Europe's bleeding breast dance the three witches—War Lust, Race Lust, Gold Lust.

"That is no place for you, my Lord. Come away to this Asia—this land of Buddha, Janak, Kabir, Nanak, Nitai, Shuk and Shanak. Bring your new message to this ancient home of idealism. Reign supreme in Hind and be the brightest jewel in her diadem. Our heavy-laden hearts will find comfort in you. Teach us the lesson of humility, service and truth. Sound the trumpet of a new awakening. Teach us patience and courage; remove all fear. Give us the strength to accept all suffering, O glorious first of *Satyagrahis*!¹ Let us not be faint-hearted when persecution comes. May your light guide us in the

¹ Passive resisters.

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pursuit of life eternal. Teach us sympathy, O Teacher of love. Come and fill our hearts. Give us the love that fulfils itself in service among the poor, the lowly and lost.

"Our hearts aspire for that ideal, but if we falter, extend your loving arms to help us. Give us the strength 'to die to live.' O Helper of the helpless! nourish our feeble desires. Touch our paralysed hearts. Hold our hands and guide us to the true life. Give us the faith that brings never-failing strength. O Comforter! lead us to the feet of the Father. When sorrow and suffering make us faint, let us remember your cry at Calvary—

"'Forsake me not my Father, O my Father!'"

G.—BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON PAGE 84

Macaulay wrote of Bentinck, who was Governor-General from 1827 to 1835: "He inspired oriental despotism with the spirit of Britain and Freedom." Roy co-operated with him in the suppression of widow-burning. Keshub inspired the Marriage Act of 1872 which opened the way to inter-caste and civil marriage. Ramkrishna and Vivekananda inspired the Ramkrishna Mission, which carries on dispensaries, orphanages, schools, etc. (EDITOR.)

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